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NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

First Session of the Seventh Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thirty-second Volume.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE
TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER TO THE THIRTIETH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1879.



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FROM 8TH OCTOBER, 1879.

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 Whyte, John Blair, Waikato.
 Willis, William Jarvis, Rangitikei.
 Wood, Reader Gilson, Waitemata.
 Wright, Edward George, Coleridge.

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NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

First Session of the Seventh Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 24th September, 1879.

Opening of Parliament.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT of New Zealand, which was prorogued on the 11th day of August, 1879, to the 1st September, was dissolved by Proclamation on the 15th August. On the same day writs were issued by Proclamation, which writs were made returnable on the 17th September, on which day Parliament was summoned to meet. Parliament was thence prorogued to Wednesday, the 24th day of September, on which day it met for the despatch of business.

The Parliament was opened by Commission.

The Legislative Council being met,

Three of the Commissioners—namely, the Hon. Sir W. Fitzherbert, K.C.M.G., the Hon. G. S. Whitmore, C.M.G., and the Hon. M. Richmond, C.B.—took their seats. The Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, fourth Commissioner, was absent.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said,—His Excellency the Governor, not thinking fit to be personally present here this day, hath been pleased to cause a Commission to be issued, in order to the opening and holding of this Parliament.

The Hon. the SPEAKER commanded the Clerk to inform the members of the House of Representatives that the Commissioners desired their immediate attendance in the Legislative Council, to hear the letters patent appointing the Commission read.

Members of the House of Representatives being come,

The Hon. the SPEAKER said,—His Excellency the Governor, not thinking fit to be present here this day, hath been pleased, in order to the opening and holding of this Parliament, to cause letters patent to be passed, under the seal of the colony, constituting us, the several honorable members therein named, his Commission, to do all things in His Excellency's name and on his part necessary to be performed in this Parlia-

ment. This will more fully appear by the letters patent, which will now be read.

The letters patent were then read by the Clerk.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said,—Honorable Legislative Councillors and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, we have it in command from His Excellency to let you know that on Thursday, the 25th day of September instant, at half-past two o'clock in the afternoon, His Excellency will, in person, declare to you the causes of calling this Parliament together. However, it being necessary that a Speaker of the House of Representatives be first chosen, His Excellency requests you, Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, to repair to the place where you usually sit, and there proceed to the choice of a fit and proper person to fill that high and important office; and that, after having chosen him, you present him on Thursday next, at the Government House, at noon, to His Excellency for approval.

Then the members of the House of Representatives withdrew.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past two o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 24th September, 1879.

Opening of Parliament—Speaker.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

The House met at two o'clock.

A message was brought by Leonard Stowe, Esq., Clerk of the Legislative Council, to the following effect: "The Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor to do all things in his name in order to the opening of this Parliament, request the attendance in the Legislative Council Chamber of the members of this honorable House to hear the Commission read."

Accordingly the House, with the Clerk, went to the Legislative Council Chamber; and, a Commission having been read for the opening and holding of Parliament, the Commissioners directed the House to proceed to the election of a Speaker,

and present him next day at noon at Government House, for His Excellency's approval.

Members being returned,

The Clerk of Writs delivered to Francis Eastwood Campbell, Esq., Clerk of the House, a list of the members who had been returned to serve in the present Parliament.

Francis Eastwood Campbell, Esq., Clerk of the House, a Commissioner appointed by *dedimus potestatem* for administering the oath to the members, did administer the oath to the members who appeared; which being done, and the members having subscribed the oath, they took their seats in the House.

SPEAKER.

Sir G. GREY.—Major Campbell: I move that Mr. George Maurice O'Rorke, member for Onehunga, do take the chair of this House as Speaker. I will briefly state to honorable gentlemen, in making this motion, that in the last Parliament it was my duty to move that Mr. O'Rorke should, in that Parliament, take the chair as Speaker. The motion was then made because it was generally known by the House that Mr. O'Rorke possessed qualities which peculiarly fitted him to fill the chair of this House—a knowledge of parliamentary law and custom, great impartiality, and the power of regulating debate. The proposal that I made on that occasion was seconded by the leader of the Opposition, and it was received, I may say, with unanimous approbation. During the whole of last session Mr. O'Rorke occupied the chair as Speaker, and I am sure that he performed his duties to the satisfaction of the late Parliament. Encouraged, therefore, by that precedent, and satisfied I am doing that which is best for the conduct of the business of this House, I move, That Mr. George Maurice O'Rorke, member for Onehunga, do take the chair of this House as Speaker.

Mr. HALL.—I have very great pleasure in seconding the motion which has just been made by the Prime Minister. Although I have been but recently elected to this House, it has been my good fortune to sit in this House previously for many years with Mr. O'Rorke. For a short time I have been on the same side of politics with that honorable gentleman; but for the greater part of the time it has been, if I may say so, my misfortune to be on the opposite side to him. During the whole of the time, however, of our sitting together, conscientious and wide as our differences on political matters may have been, they have never interfered with the most cordial relations subsisting between us in private life. What I have said for myself, I think I may also say for every honorable gentleman who has sat in this House with Mr. O'Rorke—that, however wide and great the differences that may have existed between them, they have never interfered with their private friendship. It is such a disposition and character which is essentially calculated to make an impartial Speaker; and it is one reason why I have very great pleasure in seconding the motion of the Prime Minister. I have also in former years, when a member of this House, known the manner in which Mr. O'Rorke discharged the arduous and important

duties of Chairman of Committees, and I am glad to bear my testimony to the admirable manner in which those duties were fulfilled. I was not a member of this House during the time the honorable gentleman occupied the Speaker's chair, but I nevertheless had an opportunity of observing the fairness and impartiality which have deservedly won for him the encomiums which have been passed by the House. I have therefore great pleasure in seconding the motion. I feel sure honorable gentlemen will agree with me that in the hands of Mr. O'Rorke the character and dignity of this House, so far as they are in the keeping of the Speaker, will be entirely safe.

Mr. O'RORKE.—Major Campbell: It would ill become me to say anything in the way of complaint about the too complimentary terms in which I have been alluded to by my proposer and seconder, or the flattering reception which my name has met with at the hands of this House. I know very well the high qualifications which are requisite in a Speaker of this House. He must be patient, he must be prompt, he must be firm, he must be courteous, he must keep aloof from party politics, he must be ever on the alert to party tactics in debate. To these essential qualifications I can lay but slight claim; but it is the feeling that I do possess one important qualification, which encourages me to hope that I shall be able to discharge the duties of the office—and that is, the qualification of impartiality. Earnest politician as I am, and knowing there are some matters in which I must always feel a deep interest, I hope I shall not allow those feelings to interfere with the proper discharge of my duties as Speaker. I do not wish to make allusion to the brief period during which I had the honor of holding the office of Speaker last session, but I will speak of the lengthened period during which I had the honor of holding the office of Chairman of Committees in this House. During all that period it has been my good fortune that my decisions have never been challenged by any member of the House. If I am re-elected to the higher position of Speaker, I shall endeavour, to the best of my ability, to preserve order, to maintain decorum and the courtesies of parliamentary debate, to uphold the dignity of this House, and to merit the confidence which you feel disposed to repose in me to-day.

The honorable gentleman was then led to the chair by his proposer and seconder.

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT.—I desire to repeat my humble acknowledgments to the House for the high honor they have conferred upon me in unanimously electing me to be their Speaker. I feel assured that in the discharge of the responsible duties of that high office I can always, in times of difficulty, calculate on receiving your cordial co-operation, which indeed must ever be the mainstay of the efficiency of one charged with a Speaker's functions; and I trust that during my period of office you will not have cause to regret the choice you have made this day.

Mr. READER WOOD.—Sir, will you permit me to congratulate you on your election to the office of Speaker? I think, if I recollect right—it is now many years ago—I moved that you

should be first Chairman of Committees, and I have very great pleasure now in congratulating you upon the higher office which you have assumed by the unanimous wish of this House.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I move, That this House do now adjourn until two o'clock to-morrow.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I beg to second the motion, and in doing so I take the opportunity of adding my congratulations to those already offered to you on behalf of this House by the honorable member for Waitemata. I am sure that, on whatever side of the House we sit, we shall always rest satisfied with the decisions you may feel it your duty to give.

Mr. SPEAKER-ELECT.—I desire to tender my grateful thanks to the honorable members for Waitemata and Egmont for the high compliments they have paid me when congratulating me upon my elevation to the Speaker's chair.

Motion agreed to, and the House then adjourned.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 25th September, 1879.

Governor's Speech—Address in Reply.

The Council met at two o'clock p.m.

Shortly afterwards His EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR entered the Chamber and took the chair. A message was forwarded to the House of Representatives, summoning the attendance of the members in the Council Chamber, who being come, with their Speaker,—

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

His EXCELLENCY was pleased to deliver the following Speech:—

HONORABLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

In opening this, the Seventh Parliament of New Zealand, I am sure you will unite with me in an earnest hope that the new Parliament may be distinguished for the enactment of such measures as shall be most conducive towards promoting the happiness and welfare of the people.

We have reached what is, perhaps, as yet the most important epoch in the history of the colony; and the future will very much depend upon the impress which may be stamped upon it by the action of this Parliament.

It is matter for congratulation that, notwithstanding the severe monetary pressure and commercial gloom which have for some time past prevailed throughout the world, the position of this colony is thoroughly sound.

In accordance with constitutional usage, I recently allowed an appeal to the electors of the

colony; and they have availed themselves of this opportunity to make manifest their wishes with regard to measures of great importance, which it was proposed should be enacted as part of the permanent constitutional law of the colony.

The elections having been completed, I have, at the earliest possible period, called you together to avail myself of your advice and assistance in considering these measures, and in carrying on the necessary legislation of the country.

My Responsible Advisers, following up the line of policy which was indicated during the last session of the late Parliament, have prepared measures giving effect to the views which were then made known to the country. Amongst these there will be submitted to you a Bill to amend the law relating to electors qualified to vote at the election of members of the House of Representatives. In this measure the broad principle is adopted that every man who pays taxes, and is otherwise affected by legislation, has a right to representation.

A Bill which will also claim your consideration is one which proposes to reduce the longest period for which the House of Representatives can sit from five to three years. This enactment will render each member more directly accountable to his constituents than he at present is, and will secure to the electors the power of returning members so frequently to the House of Representatives that public opinion, which often in young countries takes a new direction, from the rapidly-varying circumstances of such communities, will be fairly represented in every phase which that opinion may assume.

But these provisions will be of comparatively little value unless the constituencies are so arranged that, in as far as practicable, population in each electoral district respectively shall be duly represented. This right was assured to the people of New Zealand by the British Parliament, in the Act which originally gave them a Representative Constitution. The measure on this subject which is to be submitted to you will substantially secure a return, and an adherence for the future, to that important principle of the Constitution Act.

These three measures are, in the opinion of my Advisers, so equitable in themselves, and so accordant with the spirit of modern times, that, should they become law, there is, the Government believes, every prospect that a feeling of general contentment would be permanently established in the colony. The power of legislation would then

largely rest in the hands of the people of New Zealand; and it is to be hoped that they will always maintain within its limits an equitable system of taxation, a just administration of public lands, and a sound system of local self-government. The alterations which will be produced in the Constitution Act by the proposed measures will be but slight, whilst they are evidently in accord with the popular wish.

A Bill will be submitted for your consideration to suspend plurality of voting in cases of elections of local governing bodies whilst those bodies are subsidized out of the general revenue of the colony.

Measures will also be submitted to you which will enable those desiring to occupy small farms or rural allotments to obtain possession of lands much more readily, and at a smaller cost, than they can be obtained under the present system.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The estimates will be laid before you accompanied by financial measures calculated, in the opinion of my Government, to promote the interests of the colony, and to maintain its credit.

A very general desire appears to exist that consideration should be given to the best means of promoting and encouraging manufactures and local industries in this colony. With a view to give effect to this desire, you may probably think it advisable to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the subject.

The public works in progress continue to be vigorously prosecuted, and you will be asked to make provision for the further prosecution of those works which have already been authorized by Parliament.

In pursuance of the intention of the Legislature in the session of 1878, considerable pains have been taken by the Public Works Department to ascertain the best route for connecting by rail the east and west coasts of the northern portion of the Middle Island; and also the best route from Amberley to Cook Strait. As these are works of great magnitude and importance, and must involve a very large expenditure of public money, it is deemed prudent, in order to take advantage of every possible means of ascertaining the best routes, that the relative merits of the various lines should be carefully considered. With that view you will be asked to submit the whole question to full and exhaustive examination and inquiry by a Select Committee.

HONORABLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

A measure will be laid before you by which lands the property of the Natives, not purchased by the Government for the public, will henceforth be sold in small blocks in the open market, on such terms as may be agreed upon with the proprietors. My Advisers are of opinion that by the adoption of this system great advantages will be secured to the whole European population of New Zealand; whilst the Natives will have the satisfaction of receiving the full value of their estates, and will no longer be subjected to those importunities and temptations to induce them to part with their lands which have hitherto proved a fertile source of misunderstanding and of evil to the two races.

The assurance which I was enabled to give to the members of Parliament at the opening of the last session, in regard to the peaceful and loyal action of the Native people generally, has been borne out by the results.

No further development has taken place of the fanatical movement on the West Coast, and the tribes concerned appear to be quietly awaiting the action of the Parliament and of the ordinary Courts of law.

Steps are being taken for the holding of a full inquiry into the existence and extent of the alleged unfulfilled promises in regard to lands.

Two intertribal disturbances, arising out of disputed claims to land, have occurred, in one instance attended with loss of life. The necessary measures are being taken to vindicate the law.

A Bill will be submitted for your consideration to regulate the immigration of Chinese into the colony.

A valuable interim report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the subject of higher education has been received and laid before both Houses. When the final report has been made, no delay shall take place in laying it before you, and in communicating to you the measures which the Government may recommend for adoption on the whole subject, which is one of paramount importance to educational interests in the colony.

Various other measures will be laid before you during this session. On each of these I am confident you will bestow your careful attention, exerting yourselves in all respects to promote the interests of this colony, the destinies of which Providence has in so large a measure intrusted to your charge. In all your efforts to attain this end you may rely on receiving my ready and

earnest co-operation. I sincerely trust that a spirit of wisdom and of sound judgment may animate each branch of the Legislature.

His EXCELLENCY, having handed the Hon. the SPEAKER a copy of his Speech, withdrew.

The Council adjourned for ten minutes.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair.

PRAYERS.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

On the motion of the Hon. Colonel WHITMORE, it was ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address in reply to His Excellency's opening Speech, such Committee to consist of the Hon. Major Richmond, C.B., the Hon. Captain Fraser, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, the Hon. Mr. John Johnston, and the mover.

The Council adjourned at eight minutes past three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 25th September, 1879.

Speaker—Opening of Parliament—First Reading—Governor's Speech.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SPEAKER.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have to report to the House that, on appearing before His Excellency at noon with the Hon. Sir George Grey, K.C.B., the proposer, and the Hon. John Hall, the seconder, of my nomination as Speaker, and soliciting His Excellency's confirmation of the choice of the House, His Excellency was graciously pleased to accord the confirmation asked for, and to confirm, on behalf of the Queen, all the rights and privileges of the House of Representatives, to the same extent as they have been granted hitherto, and to assure me that the House of Representatives would always have ready access to him, and that he would at all times place the most favourable construction on their proceedings. It is for me now to repeat my respectful acknowledgments to the House for the high honor they have done me in unanimously electing me as their Speaker.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

A message was received from His Excellency the Governor, desiring the attendance of members in the Legislative Council Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER, accompanied by members, and preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms bearing the mace, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber, and, after a short absence, returned.

FIRST READING.

Imbecile Passengers Act Extension Bill.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER informed honorable members that, when the House, in obedience to summons,

attended His Excellency in the Legislative Council Chamber, His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech, of which he had, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy. He then read the Speech.

The House adjourned at half-past three o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 26th September, 1879.

Education Reserves—Chairman of Committees—Sessional Committees.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

EDUCATION RESERVES.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL, in asking the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, At what time the return will be laid upon the table respecting education reserves, ordered on 29th October, 1878? said the question which he had put to the Government would explain itself. It would be in the recollection of the honorable gentleman opposite that in October, 1878, the Council was pleased, upon his motion, to pass a resolution that the Government should seek from the heads of departments certain information with reference to the education reserves. The subject was one of very great importance, and some of these days it would have to be dealt with in a comprehensive way.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said that this was a very important report, and the honorable gentleman, when he moved for the return, must have been aware that it could not be compiled in a moment. The information had as nearly as possible been obtained, and had been in the Printer's hands for some time past, but, in consequence of the pressure of work, he had not been able to get it out yet. However, the return would be printed by next week, and it would be laid on the table, he trusted, that day week.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE, in moving, That the Hon. Captain Baillie be appointed Chairman of Committees for this session, said he thought the resolution would be unanimously supported.

Motion agreed to.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

HOUSE.—The Hon. the Speaker, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, the Hon. Mr. Robinson, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Captain Fraser, the Hon. Colonel Brett, the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.

PUBLIC PETITIONS.—The Hon. Captain Fraser, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson, the Hon. Mr. Scotland, the Hon. Mr. Robinson, the Hon. Mr. Edwards, the Hon. Mr. Nurse, the Hon. Mr. Ngatata, and the Hon. Colonel Brett.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 26th September, 1879.

First Readings—Sessional Committees—Museums—Auckland Improvement Commissioners—Parnell Borough—Cheviot Election—Theatrical Representations—Bruce Polling-places—Grain, Flour, and Timber Duties—Electoral Rolls—Chairman of Committees—Adjournment.

MR. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Auckland Loans Consolidation Bill, Auckland Harbour Reclamation Bill, Auckland Improvement Commissioners Transfer of Powers Bill, Auckland Provincial Council Library Bill, Plurality of Voting Suspension Bill, Representation Bill, Triennial Parliaments Bill, Maori Land Alienation Bill, Kaitangata and Wangaloa Athenæums Reserves Bill.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

HOUSE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Barron, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bunny, Mr. Driver, Mr. J. T. Fisher, Mr. George, Mr. Johnston, Mr. McDonald, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Reeves, Mr. Rolleston, Captain Russell, Mr. Seymour, Mr. Whitaker, and Mr. Reader Wood.

REPORTING DEBATES AND PRINTING.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bain, Mr. Ballance, Mr. Bowen, Mr. Brown, Mr. De Lautour, Mr. Gisborne, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. McCaughan, Mr. Moss, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Reid, Mr. Shephard, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Wakefield, and Dr. Wallis.

LIBRARY.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bowen, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bunny, Mr. Gisborne, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Hall, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Moorhouse, Mr. Rolleston, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Swanson, Mr. Tole, and Mr. Reader Wood.

GOLD FIELDS.—Mr. Brown, Mr. De Lautour, Mr. Finn, Mr. J. B. Fisher, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Gisborne, Mr. H. Hirst, Mr. Ireland, Mr. Masters, Mr. Murray, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Reeves, Mr. Reid, Mr. Seddon, and Mr. Sheehan.

PETITIONS CLASSIFICATION.—Mr. Barron, Mr. Fulton, Mr. H. Hirst, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Levin, Mr. Moss, Mr. Reeves, Major Te Wheoro, Mr. Thomson, and Major Willis.

WASTE LANDS.—Mr. Acton Adams, Major Atkinson, Mr. Ballance, Mr. Bunny, Captain Colbeck, Mr. Finn, Mr. J. B. Fisher, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hislop, Mr. W. J. Hurst, Mr. Ireland, Mr. Mason, Mr. Moorhouse, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Rolleston, Mr. Shanks, Mr. Thomson, Colonel Trimble, and Mr. Whitaker.

NATIVE.—Mr. Acton Adams, Mr. Allwright, Mr. Bryce, Mr. J. T. Fisher, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Hamlin, Mr. Lundon, Mr. McDonald, Mr. Moss, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Reeves, Mr. Rolleston, Captain Russell, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Swanson, Mr. Tainui, Mr. Tawhai, Major Te Wheoro, Mr. Tomoana, Colonel Trimble, Mr. Wakefield, and Mr. Whitaker.

STANDING ORDERS.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bunny, Mr. Gisborne, Mr. Hislop, Mr. Macandrew, Mr. Richmond, and Mr. Seymour.

MUSEUMS.

MR. MOSS asked the Government, If they will lay before this House a return showing expenditure of public money on each of the museums in the colony, and the endowments from Crown lands (with the revenue received from the same) which have been made to the said museums respectively?

Sir G. GREY replied that the return would be furnished so far as it could be procured, but he doubted if some portions of it asked for could be furnished.

AUCKLAND IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS.

MR. MOSS asked the Government, If they will lay before this House a return showing the expenditure of the Auckland Improvement Commissioners—(1) on streets, roads, and footpaths in the City of Auckland; (2) on the Recreation Reserve for the said city; (3) for all other purposes; also the amount of the debt due by the said Commissioners, and their present annual revenue and expenditure; together with a plan of the endowment administered by the said Commissioners, showing the sections leased and unleased at the present time?

Sir G. GREY said the return would be laid on the table of the House.

PARNELL BOROUGH.

MR. MOSS asked the Government, What steps, if any, they propose to take with reference to the petition presented last session by the Borough of Parnell, and referred to the Government by the Waste Lands Committee in their report thereon? Last session the Waste Lands Committee reported upon this petition, to the effect that the question to which the petition related was one of administration, with which the Committee did not think it advisable to interfere.

MR. THOMSON said the question asked by the honorable gentleman referred to rather an important subject. He might state that there were several municipalities in the same position as Parnell, in so far as endowments were concerned. The Government had the matter under their consideration, and he hoped they would be able shortly to state what steps they intended to take in reference to this and other matters of a similar nature.

CHEVIOT ELECTION.

MR. SAUNDERS asked the Postmaster-General, Whether a telegram sent by the Colonial Secretary to Mr. Henry Ingles, a Justice of the Peace at Kaikoura—and which Mr. Ingles reports in a letter to the *Canterbury Press* to be in substance, "Will you stand on policy as defined in Governor's Speech? If you will, you shall have the entire support of the party; even if defeated you will have claims to consideration;" but which a Government organ claims to have been sent in exactly the following words: "19th August.—Will you stand on policy of Governor's Speech in opposition to Saunders? Party will support you as far as possible, and consider you to have a claim upon it even if unsuccessful"—was franked by Colonel Whitmore as a telegram on public service, or was paid for as a private

telegram? He did not think it was necessary for him to offer any apology for asking this question. He might simply say that, if this telegram stood alone, it would be a sufficient ground for the House to inquire as to the course the Government took with reference to influencing elections to that House at the public expense. From the accidental circumstances under which this telegram was discovered, he thought it would be found that it was but a sample of a vast number of others which had been sent, and with regard to which the House would no doubt like to have some information.

Sir G. GREY wished to ask the Speaker's ruling as to whether it was right for an honorable member, in putting a question, to use the words "a Government organ." He did not know what those words meant. He was not aware that there was any Government organ.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had asked the honorable member for Cheviot if he could substitute the name of the paper, and the honorable member told him he did not know the name of the paper. The honorable gentleman had used the words as a quotation, and he did not think the honorable gentleman was exceeding the latitude allowed to honorable members in putting questions. He did not think that the question as to whether or not the newspaper was a Government or Opposition organ was really involved in this matter.

Mr. J. T. FISHER replied that he had seen the original telegram. It was marked "Urgent," and the Hon. Colonel Whitmore's name appeared on the corner. He had seen the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, who stated that he intended it to go as a private telegram, but from the haste with which it was forwarded it was not paid for; but the Hon. Colonel Whitmore would have to pay for it.

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS.

Mr. DICK asked the Government, If they have been requested to take any action to prevent theatrical representations of an immoral tendency in the City of Dunedin; and what steps, if any, they propose to take in the matter? Honorable members were no doubt aware that a company of players had recently been performing in the City of Wellington, and their theatrical representations had been condemned by the Press as improper and as having an immoral tendency. The company had since gone south, and the inhabitants of Dunedin had taken some alarm, and were anxious to know whether there was any power to stop such displays. There was an Ordinance of the Provincial Council which gave the Superintendent the power to prohibit immoral and indecent theatrical displays, and that power, when Provincial Councils were abolished, was transferred to the Governor. He desired to know if the Government were prepared to exercise that power, and if they would do so upon this occasion.

Mr. MACANDREW said that certain representations had been made to the Government on the subject referred to by the honorable member. The honorable gentleman was quite correct in saying that an Ordinance existed in Otago upon the subject, and it was still on the Statute Book.

The police had been directed to see that the provisions of the Statute were completely carried out in Dunedin; and it was to be hoped that would have the desired effect. He might say that the provisions of the Ordinance were very stringent. Not only the parties performing, but the owners of the building, were liable to heavy penalties; and persons conducting licensed houses in which such exhibitions took place were liable to have their licenses rescinded. He thought it might be well if the provisions of this Ordinance were extended throughout New Zealand. This was not the only measure passed by the Provincial Council of Otago that would be of benefit to the whole colony.

BRUCE POLLING-PLACES.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, If they will cause three additional polling-places for the electoral district of Bruce to be appointed—namely, the schoolhouses at Wanganos, Stirling, and Lovell's Flat respectively?

Mr. THOMSON said it was found previous to the last general election that there were many polling-places which were not at all suitable. It was the intention of the Government to make due inquiry, and to appoint suitable polling-places all over the colony, and the suggestions of the honorable member with regard to the polling-places mentioned in his question would then be taken into consideration.

GRAIN, FLOUR, AND TIMBER DUTIES.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, If they propose this session to reimpose the duties upon grain, flour, and timber?

Sir G. GREY replied that the Government would state to the House, when the Financial Statement was brought forward, what they intended to do in reference to these duties.

Mr. MURRAY would like to ask the honorable gentleman when there would be any chance of the Financial Statement being brought down. If it was not the intention of the Government to deal with this question, he intended to move in the matter himself.

Sir G. GREY said there was nothing to prevent the honorable gentleman from moving in the matter himself, if he thought proper. He would at the earliest possible period intimate to the House when the Financial Statement would be delivered, but he thought he could hardly be expected to do so on the second day of the session.

ELECTORAL ROLLS.

On the motion of Mr. BRANDON, it was ordered, That a return be laid upon the table showing the population and the number of electors on the electoral roll of each electoral district, and the number of electors who polled in each district on the occasion of the last general election.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Sir G. GREY.—I rise to move that Mr. Seymour be appointed Chairman of Committees of the whole House. During last session a similar motion was made, and the unanimous approval of

the House was given to the appointment of Mr. Seymour to the position which I now venture to propose he should again hold. The experience that we had during the last short session of Mr. Seymour's abilities in the chair, fully justified the step which the House then took. I therefore feel that I need not delay the House by making any lengthened speech on this subject, simply assuring honorable members that, if they agree with the motion I have made, they will find that they have acted wisely, and to the advantage and benefit of the House itself, as well as for the convenience of honorable members and the facility of conducting public business. I will now move, That Mr. Seymour be appointed Chairman of Committees of the whole House.

Mr. HALL.—I have very much pleasure in seconding the motion of the Prime Minister, and I am exceedingly glad that he has made this proposition, for I believe it is very desirable we should make it a rule to select for positions such as that of Chairman of Committees the best men we can find in the House, altogether irrespective of party considerations: and that the Prime Minister now proposes to do. I hope that as much as possible—I do not suppose it will be quite possible—these questions will, in the conduct of our business, cease to be decided on party grounds. I have reason to know that Mr. Seymour possesses almost every qualification which could be desired in a Chairman of Committees. He has had long experience in that office. In the discharge of his duties he has gained the respect and the confidence of this House. The House has found him to possess the patience, firmness, and courtesy which are so indispensable to the proper discharge of those duties. In fact, it occurs to me that Mr. Seymour was almost born to be a Chairman of Committees. I have very great pleasure in seconding the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. SEYMOUR. — Mr. Speaker, I greatly crave the indulgence of the House while I thank my proposer and seconder on this occasion for the very kind terms in which they have spoken of my past services as Chairman of Committees in this House. I have also most heartily to thank the House for having for the third time called me to that honorable and important position. This House very largely consists of new members, and, as to these gentlemen, they must perforce take my future performance of the duties of that office somewhat upon trust; but with respect to the older members of the House I hope I may be allowed to infer, from the unanimity of expression on this occasion, that my services during the past have gained their confidence and respect; and I may promise that no exertions of mine will be spared in the future to continue to earn that confidence. There are, I am aware, at times very difficult questions to decide while performing those duties; and, if you will allow me to say so, Sir, it is a source of very great satisfaction to me that I find you sitting in the chair—a gentleman who has had unlimited experience of these very duties which I am now called to perform, and to whose advice and assistance I feel certain I may

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have recourse in those cases where perhaps my more limited experience may fail to point out the direction in which my decision should be given.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Perhaps I may be permitted to observe that it affords me not merely satisfaction, but very great gratification, to know that my honorable friend the member for Wairau will be associated with me in the conduct of the business of the House of Representatives. And I feel sure I am expressing the mind of the House when I say I congratulate Mr. Seymour on his re-election as Chairman of Committees of the whole House.

ADJOURNMENT.

Sir G. GREY.—I now rise to move, That this House do adjourn until Tuesday next.

Mr. HALL.—Before that question is put, I wish to make an observation or two. I presume that, when the House meets again, the Government will proceed with the motion of which the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews) has given notice—in fact, the Government has been courteous enough to inform me that such is the intention; and therefore I wish to take this opportunity of stating the course the Opposition will think it right to pursue when the Address in Reply is proposed. It will probably be for the convenience of the House that I should do so. We regret that the motion has not been gone on with this afternoon. We are anxious to get on with the public business with the least possible delay; and we were perfectly prepared to go on with the discussion, and to go to a division this evening, if such were convenient to honorable members opposite. It is possible that to some members this would not be convenient, and, to consult their convenience, we are not going to oppose the adjournment. However, we are quite prepared; and I hope we shall not be told again by what may be regarded as the Government organ in this city—the paper which gets the Government advertisements—that it is the duty of the Opposition not to throw obstruction in the way of public business. I now add that, when the motion is moved of which the honorable member for Christchurch City has given notice, I shall move this addition to the Address: "Whilst, however, we are prepared to give effect to the liberal measures desired by the country, we feel bound to submit to your Excellency that your Excellency's Government, as at present constituted, does not possess the confidence of this House." We shall be ready to go on with the debate on that question, and to go to a division at the earliest possible moment.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to four o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, 30th September, 1879.*First Reading—Sessional Committees—Privilege—Address
in Reply.The Hon. the **SPEAKER** took the chair at half-past two o'clock.**PRAYERS.****FIRST READING.**

Habitual Drunkards Bill.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**LIBRARY.**—The Hon. the Speaker, the Hon. Major Richmond, C.B., the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, the Hon. Mr. Pharaizyn, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Captain Fraser, the Hon. Mr. Hart, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson, the Hon. Dr. Grace, and the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.**WASTE LANDS.**—The Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, the Hon. Captain Fraser, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Robinson, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, and the Hon. Mr. Wilson.**STANDING ORDERS.**—The Hon. the Speaker, the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, the Hon. Major Richmond, C.B., the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.**REPORTING.**—The Hon. the Speaker, the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Gray, the Hon. Mr. Chamberlin, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.**PRINTING.**—The Hon. the Speaker, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. Hart, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, the Hon. Mr. Miller, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.**LOCAL BILLS.**—The Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. Scotland, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.**JOINT COMMITTEE ON BILLS.**—The Hon. Major Richmond, C.B., the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.**JOINT COMMITTEE ON STANDING ORDERS ON PRIVATE BILLS.**—The Hon. Major Richmond, C.B., the Hon. Mr. P. A. Buckley, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.**SELECTION.**—The Hon. Mr. J. Johnston, the Hon. Mr. Chamberlin, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. Scotland, and the Hon. Captain Baillie.**PRIVILEGE.**The Hon. Mr. **MANTELL**.—Before the Council proceeds to the business on the Order Paper, I think it is my duty to call attention to what appears to me to be a serious breach of the privileges of the Council, which occurred during the recess prior to the last session of the Assembly. I should have drawn the attention of the Council to the matter during the brief session last past, but I was prevented by ill-health from doing so. I refer to a criminal case which was instituted by certain persons against a witness who had been examined before one of the Committees of this

Council some seven or eight years ago for perjury alleged to have been committed in his evidence given before that Committee. The Committee is one which any honorable member who had a seat in the Council at the time would not have forgotten—the Select Committee upon Council Paper No. 97—and its inquiries were devoted to matters which were alleged to have occurred in connection with Native land purchases in the Hawke's Bay District. A Mr. Kinross was among the witnesses examined, and, in common with other witnesses, he was examined upon oath, in pursuance of the power given to the Committee at the time it was appointed by the Council. I mention this circumstance simply to make more clear what I shall have to say before I conclude. I will not detain the Council unnecessarily long. In the course of his evidence Mr. Kinross deposed upon oath that he never gave spirits to Natives as a consideration for land. The charge against him was that, in having sworn to that statement before the Committee, he had committed perjury, inasmuch as he was constantly giving spirits to the Natives in exchange for their land. Of course, in common with other members of this Council, I should be sorry if any encouragement were given to witnesses giving evidence on oath before Select Committees of this Council to forget the obligations of their oath and to perjure themselves; and therefore my inclination would be, in the event of witnesses being charged with perjury, and in the event of the consent of this Council to their prosecution being asked, to invariably vote for that consent being given. But upon this occasion, without the consent of the Council being asked to the prosecution—without even the cognizance of the Council—a suit was brought and pursued before the Resident Magistrate's Court with a view to the commitment of the defendant. Officers of this Council were summoned to give evidence—even to produce the records of this Council before the Resident Magistrate; and I myself, as a member of the Council, was subpoenaed, and, after attending Court six different times, eventually pleaded my privilege as a member of the Council, and was relieved from giving evidence. The same course was taken by officers of the Council; and consequently the case was dropped. At the same time, I think you will see, Sir, and the Council will see, that in the institution of this case without the consent of the Council there was a distinct breach of our privileges; and, though none of us would wish to pursue vindictively those who have been guilty of that breach, and though it must be recognized that the breach was not pressed to the extreme, still, this being the first case of the sort, we are bound to take some action, so as to draw public attention to the fact that witnesses who come before our Select Committees are privileged, and that the Council will not submit to the infraction of its privileges by the institution of such suits as this with impunity, where the consent of the Council has not been obtained. Of course the easiest plan for me to pursue would be to move that Paramena to Oneone, and possibly his legal adviser—for I see that in most cases of a similar kind before the House of Commons both have

been censured or punished—be summoned to this Council; but I am hardly desirous of taking any such direct steps. I would rather, with the consent of the Council, move that the consideration of the whole question should be referred to the Committee on Standing Orders, or else to a Select Committee consisting of the gentlemen who compose the Standing Orders Committee, with instructions to inquire into the matter, to take such evidence as may be necessary, and to report thereon to the Council, with a view to our proceeding deliberately in the proper course. I might observe that the legal adviser in this case was a gentleman who could scarcely be ignorant of parliamentary privilege, inasmuch as he was only lately a very distinguished member of another branch of the Legislature, and, of course, by profession a lawyer. Therefore he could scarcely plead ignorance of our privileges in advising the institution of these proceedings without the permission of the Council. Subject to any suggestion which may be made, I will move the motion which I have indicated.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That it be an instruction to the Select Committee on Standing Orders to inquire into the proceedings in the case of *Paramena te Oneone v. Kinross*, in so far as those proceedings involved a breach of the privileges of this Council, and to report thereupon."—(*Hon. Mr. Mantell*.)

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Before putting this question to the Council, I might state that this matter was brought under my cognizance during the recess, as Speaker. I had to reply officially to an application that I would consent to the attendance of officers of the Council, and my opinion on that point is on record. But I take the opportunity of stating that I believe there is no doubt a breach of the privileges of this Council has been committed.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—I would like to ask my honorable friend Mr. Mantell whether we are to understand he lays it down that, although a witness may commit perjury in the evidence he gives before a Committee of this Council, he is privileged from the punishment of his crime.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—Simply privileged to this extent: He is not amenable to punishment for his perjury unless the consent of the Council is given to his prosecution; which permission would, of course, readily be given. The honorable gentleman will find five cases in the House of Commons bearing out that. One case goes so far as to show that, although it was evident a witness had been guilty, the House of Commons, because proceedings had been commenced without its consent, absolutely refused to allow further proceedings to be taken.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I do not desire to go into the merits of the case just now, although I believe there is something to be said on the other side; but I think we are indebted to the honorable gentleman for bringing this subject forward, because, if this privilege should be found to be an inconvenient obstacle in the way of justice—or if, in point of fact, it affords faci-

ties for the committal of perjury in our Committees—it is manifest there ought to be some alteration in the law, so as to place any persons giving evidence before our Committees in precisely the same position as they would occupy if giving evidence before the ordinary Courts of law.

An Hon. MEMBER.—So they are.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—Yes; but there are obstacles in the way of their being brought to justice. For nine months in the year it is impossible to institute proceedings where perjury has been committed, and clearly it would be just as impossible during that nine months to prevent a person suspected of perjury from leaving the colony and escaping from justice altogether. The necessity for the protection of persons in England when that precedent was laid down happily no longer exists, and therefore it cannot be a right thing for this Legislature to keep up a mere form, when the result is that it affords persons freedom from the consequences of their perjury.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I am unwilling to allow this matter to pass without making a brief remark upon the comments which the Hon. the Colonial Secretary has made upon the subject. I cannot for a moment admit that any circumstances of private convenience can be of such importance as to induce either this Council or the public in general to suppose for a moment that it would be advisable that a law should be introduced for the purpose of setting aside any of the privileges we have left. The privileges enjoyed by Parliament, of whatever character, are so sacred that I regret hearing the Hon. the Colonial Secretary suggest legislation for setting them aside. The truth of this matter is easily arrived at. In the first place the committal of perjury under any circumstances is an occurrence which is rarely contemplated; therefore, to contemplate exceptional legislation to cover such occasional cases as may occur would be a mistake. The only allegation that can be brought forward is that witnesses who commit perjury may escape. In the first place it is unlikely that witnesses will perjure themselves, because evidence given before this Council's Committees is given impartially, and is given by persons disinterestedly. And why? Because the character of the inquiry and the cross-examinations carried on by Select Committees are of that kind that witnesses are scarcely ever inclined to nail themselves down to any particular evidence which cannot on cross-examination be fairly sustained. But the great point is this: Perjury in evidence before Committees is an offence of extremely rare occurrence.

The Hon. Mr. P. A. BUCKLEY.—Sir, does not the resolution, as it now reads, beg the whole question, inasmuch as it declares that the proceedings which have been taken are in breach of the privileges of the Council? I am not aware that there is any privilege of this or any other Assembly which would protect a person from punishment the necessary result of an offence. That is the only point to which I wish to direct attention—whether any person who has committed the offence of perjury, which is only a misdemeanour,

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can be protected from punishment by the privileges of this House.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I think, Sir, the Hon. the Colonial Secretary would have perceived, had he devoted the same attention to *May* as this case led me to do, that there is no necessary immunity for a person during the recess, because certain powers are vested in the Speaker; and, if his powers are defective in regard to such a matter as this, I should then suggest that they be extended so as to empower the Speaker, during the recess, to act for the Council in giving permissions for prosecutions. But I think it will be found that sufficient power already vests in the Speaker to meet the difficulty suggested. The Hon. Mr. Buckley seemed to be under some misunderstanding as to what I said. I have not the slightest desire to protect any witness in the committal of perjury. In fact, in this very case, which miscarried from the want of my evidence and that of the officers of the Council, I felt disposed to regret that I did not feel it within my duty to this Council to take upon myself to give evidence, because the point at issue had been fixed upon my memory by certain little circumstances which I will not refer to now. I have no doubt, however, that the matter will come up for discussion when the Committee brings up the report, and probably I shall then have something more to say. Our privileges are not intended to protect witnesses from the consequences of giving false evidence before Committees. I might mention to the Council, because it may have escaped the memory of honorable members, that at the last sitting of this Council petitions were presented by the prosecutor in this case, asking for leave to prosecute. Therefore I thought it was proper to lose no time in bringing these proceedings under the notice of the Council, so as to smooth the way for the impartial consideration of the petitions which have been presented. The complainant, being a Maori, can only be supposed to have been very ill advised by his lawyer; but the period which has been allowed to elapse between the committal of the supposed offence and the prosecution—seven or eight years—certainly afforded time for the prosecutor or his adviser to have discovered what the privileges of the Council were, so that he should not have interfered with our privileges by proceeding to institute a charge before the leave of the Council was obtained.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. Mr. WOOD.—Sir, I rise with considerable diffidence upon this occasion to move a Reply to His Excellency's opening Speech. And I do so with a consciousness of the immense importance of the matters dealt with in that Speech, and also a deep consciousness of my own unfitness to deal with them in a proper manner. But I feel sure that I shall have the indulgence of this Council for a short time while I make a few remarks in reference thereto, and I feel that any shortcomings on my part will be looked on with very gracious eyes. The Council will doubtless heartily concur in the wish expressed in

the opening paragraph of His Excellency's Speech, that the present Parliament may be distinguished by the enactment of such measures as shall be conducive towards promoting the happiness and welfare of the people of New Zealand. I am sure we shall all heartily concur in that wish, and I trust that at the end of the present session of this Parliament it will be found that the laws have been so amended as to make them meet the general wish of the people of New Zealand from end to end. Every honorable member of this Council will learn with great pleasure that the commercial gloom and severe monetary pressure which have for some time past been prevalent throughout the world, including New Zealand, have been clearing off. It is very gratifying indeed to learn from such high authority that that gloom is now passing away, and that New Zealand at least is thoroughly sound. A severe strain undoubtedly has been felt all over the country, and it is highly pleasing to learn that so few evil effects have resulted from it. I think it may encourage us to believe that a return to that prosperity which we have hitherto enjoyed will occur at no very distant period. His Excellency informs us that proposals will be laid before the Legislature for amending the electoral laws so as to bring about a better representation of the people in the House of Representatives. This Bill, we are told, goes upon the broad principle that every man who pays taxes, or is otherwise affected by legislation, has a right to representation. That is a subject which has occupied the time and minds of thinking men for many years past. Many of the deepest thinkers of the age have formed that opinion; while others, who have devoted much time and thought to the matter, have arrived at very opposite views. I think it would not be in good taste if I were to occupy your time by giving my own views on the matter at the present moment. It is one of those questions that will come before us during the session. I may possibly have some remarks to make then, but I certainly shall not detain the Council by going into the matter at the present moment. Another part of His Excellency's Speech informs us that a Bill will be laid before us for the purpose of reducing the time for which any Parliament shall sit, from five to three years. I have always been favourable—at least, for some years—to a change in this direction. Whether the term should be two, three, four, or five years, there are great differences of opinion; but I do think myself that five years is too long in this colony—whatever it may be in an old-settled country—where changes occur so very rapidly and frequently. I think that a shorter period would be far preferable. I think, if this system were adopted of a Parliament only sitting for three years, it would tend to do away—at least, very materially to do away—with that objection, that cry that is frequently raised, that the Parliament, or the representatives, do not truly represent the people. If the representatives can be brought face to face with their constituents more frequently, a better understanding will certainly exist between them. If it were found, when a good understanding did exist, that their representatives still persisted in misrepresenting

them, it would be within the power of the constituents to change them for persons who would more truly represent their views. For that and other reasons, which I will not go into at the present moment, I think this is a step in the right direction. His Excellency is also pleased to inform us that the constituencies will be so arranged that, in so far as practicable, the population in each electoral district will be fairly represented, and that a measure for this purpose will be duly laid before us. Before passing on from this matter, I should like to say a few words. I will not detain the Council at any length, but more particularly I would wish to impress upon the mind of the representative of the Government in this Council the necessity for early steps being taken—if they have not been taken already—for the purpose of obtaining those data which will be necessary to enable them to prepare such a Bill, and lay it before this Council in such a form that it can be dealt with, and as it must be dealt with, before it can possibly take effect. It will be necessary to obtain plans showing the boundaries of the proposed electoral districts, and the population contained within such districts. These are matters that will necessarily take a very considerable time, and therefore I would venture to express the hope that the necessary steps have been already taken. I do not know whether the Bill has yet been printed; at any rate, I have not seen it. I suppose, as a matter of course, some considerable distinction will be made between town and country constituencies—I mean as to the number that shall have a right to a representative in towns or large constituencies, and also what number would be considered just in country constituencies. I think it will be admitted on all sides that there should be a considerable difference; but I am not going to suggest any number which I think would be the best in each particular case, or what should be the proportion. It is gratifying to be told by His Excellency that measures will be submitted to us which will enable those who desire to occupy small farms or rural allotments to obtain possession of lands much more readily, and at a smaller cost, than they can be obtained under the present system. I trust that well-devised measures for this purpose will be laid before us at no distant date. It is a matter which I have considered and advocated for a number of years past. In my position as a representative in the Provincial Council for several years, I advocated such principles. In my position as a member in another place I have also advocated the same principles. As a member of a Waste Lands Board I have carefully watched their operation for some years in the southern part of New Zealand, and I am thoroughly convinced—and the more I have seen the more convinced am I—that they are calculated to do substantial good to many thousands of people, by enabling them to settle, in the very best manner, many lands that are now comparatively unproductive; and I trust the small-farms system will be still further extended in such a way as to be a substantial benefit to the colony. I now come to the paragraph in

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which His Excellency is pleased to inform us that a measure will be laid before Parliament by which lands, the property of the Natives, not purchased by the Government for the public, will henceforth be sold in small blocks in the open market, on such terms as may be agreed upon with the proprietors.

"My Advisers are of opinion that by the adoption of this system great advantages will be secured to the whole European population of New Zealand, whilst the Natives will have the satisfaction of receiving the full value of their estates, and will no longer be subjected to those importunities and temptations to induce them to part with their lands which have hitherto proved a fertile source of misunderstanding and of evil to the two races."

I am not an authority on Native matters. The eighteen or twenty years I have spent in New Zealand have been at the extreme South, and therefore, beyond what I have read in the newspapers, and beyond the information I have gathered as a member of another branch of the Legislature, I cannot profess to any special knowledge of these matters. But the proposals contained in that paragraph seem to have the elements of fairness in them. I am inclined to think that, if that method is adopted, it will be calculated to remove many of the evils that are now complained of. I trust that the experiment will be made, and that it will prove as satisfactory as we could desire. There is another paragraph I should like to refer to before I sit down. We are told that no further development has taken place of the fanatical movement on the West Coast, that the tribes concerned appear to be quietly awaiting the action of the Parliament and of the ordinary Courts of law, and that steps are being taken for the holding of a full inquiry into the existence and extent of the alleged unfulfilled promises in regard to lands. I think we may congratulate ourselves that steps are being taken for this purpose. I trust that the greatest care has been exercised in the selection of persons to hold the inquiry about to be made. I trust that no loss of time will be allowed to take place. I trust that it will be a full and impartial inquiry; and, if it should be found that a wrong has been done, I trust that that wrong will be at once removed in such a way as to give satisfaction, and do ample justice to the Native persons concerned, and at the same time to confer honor on the Government. I do not think I should be justified in occupying the time of the Council at any greater length; therefore I shall conclude by moving that the Reply to His Excellency's opening Speech be agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. MARTIN.—Sir, my honorable friend has made a very long statement, and if I said a great deal more I could not improve upon it. Therefore I will second the Address in reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the following Address in reply to His Excellency's opening Speech be agreed to:—

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

"We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Council of New Zealand, desire

to return our thanks to your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session of Parliament.

"We cordially concur with your Excellency in the earnest hope that this Parliament may be distinguished by the enactment of such measures as shall be most conducive towards promoting the happiness and welfare of the people of this colony.

"We are gratified to learn from your Excellency that, notwithstanding the severe monetary pressure and commercial gloom which have for some time past prevailed throughout the colony, your Excellency has reason to believe that the position of this colony is thoroughly sound.

"We thank your Excellency for informing us that measures will be brought before us for amending the electoral laws, and for amending the laws for regulating the purchase of lands from the Natives, and also a Bill for regulating the immigration of Chinese into the colony; and we beg to assure your Excellency that these measures, and all other measures that may be brought before us, shall receive our best and most careful consideration.

"We are glad to learn from your Excellency that the state of Native affairs on the West Coast has assumed no more serious development; and we learn with satisfaction that steps are being taken to vindicate the law where it has been violated.

"Your Excellency may rely that we will bestow our best exertions in promoting the interests of the colony and the welfare of the people."—*(Hon. Mr. Wood.)*

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—Sir, I do not feel disposed to allow the Address in Reply to pass as a mere matter of course. I think there is an advantage frequently arising from a debate upon occasions of this sort; and consequently I purpose availing myself of what is the undoubted privilege of each member of this Council—namely, that of expressing his sentiments with reference to the motion now under consideration. I may say that I listened with a great deal of attention and a good deal of pleasure to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Wood, and I felt rejoiced to find that the Government had succeeded in finding some honorable member cordially supporting their views, and having a thorough belief in the genuineness of their professions. If any stranger to New Zealand politics took up the Speech of His Excellency on opening Parliament, he could not avoid arriving at the conclusion—a conclusion altogether unwarranted by facts—that the late appeal to the constituencies had been upon subjects connected with a broad policy, and did not, as undoubtedly was the fact, arise from the other branch of the Legislature having, in the strongest terms, condemned the maladministration of the Ministry. The appeal was not, as one would infer from the Speech, upon broad principles of policy, but it was an appeal from a competent tribunal, who knew the proceedings of Government, and were in a position to give a reliable opinion upon its competency—it was an appeal from that tribunal to a tribunal not so acquainted with the cir-

cumstances, and which consequently was not so competent to give an opinion upon the matter at issue as the Legislature of this colony. It is true that during the course of those elections there were continually brought forward professions of what were called great liberal principles; but those who were well acquainted with the circumstances of the case were aware that these professions of liberal policy were not brought forward in consequence of an adverse opinion expressed in reference to them by the late Parliament, but merely as a blind to divert the attention of the public from the question at issue, which was the competence of the Government, and to raise a false issue. If there ever was a case in which the term "an organized hypocrisy" could be applied to a political party, it was in reference to the action of the Government in going forth to the public in these late elections upon a cry of political principles, when the question at stake was solely and entirely their own competency or incompetency to manage the business of the country. The Speech of his Excellency refers to the present session as likely to be one—if the proposed legislation is adopted—that will be memorable in the annals of the colony. Whether this will be so or not I cannot say—time only will show—but this I can say, that at any rate the late elections will be memorable in the annals of the colony. They will be memorable on account of the issues at stake, which were, broadly stated, whether the country should be under personal rule, or whether the country should henceforth be under constitutional government. That was the broad issue, I say. They will be memorable, likewise, on account of the manner in which those elections were conducted; and if the colony does not lay to heart the lessons to be learned from the late elections—if it does not by its action condemn those measures, and does not take steps to prevent the recurrence of such measures in the future, the late elections will be memorable as the first step to the downfall of liberal institutions in the colony; because, if elections are to be conducted in the future as they have recently been conducted, one thing is certain—that our institutions will cease to have the respect of the inhabitants, their power for good will thereby be affected, and we shall gradually sink lower and lower until we assume a position no higher than that of the Spanish States in South America. The late elections have, as we all know, been very closely contested; but, from the first, it has appeared to those who disinterestedly watched the campaign that the combatants were altogether unmatched. On one side we saw the Government, armed with the power of the purse, having at its command a treasury, possessing command over steamers placed at its disposal, capable of influencing the Press by the advertisements with which it had the power of favouring those papers that supported its views; having at its command the Telegraph Department, the Native Department, the Armed Constabulary Department; and having further at its command the power of recommending gentlemen to His Excellency for seats in this Council. We have seen, on

the one side, the Government armed with all these powers, and prepared to use them to the fullest extent. We have seen, on the other side, the party in opposition to them deprived of those advantages, and labouring under the still further disadvantage of having a spark of conscience not altogether extinct, and of still possessing some regard for constitutional rule. These things were disadvantages, as compared with advantages possessed by the Government, which from the first rendered the combatants unequally matched, and which undoubtedly had a great influence upon the elections. The course adopted by the Government in the recent elections is a course unparalleled in the history of this colony—unparalleled in the practice of the mother-country—unparalleled and unprecedented in the practice of any constitutional country, with the exception, probably, of the neighbouring colony of Victoria—one whose constitutional history should serve, in my opinion, as a warning rather than an example to this colony. I refer to the course of the Ministry in stamping the country, with a view not only of forwarding their own interests, but likewise of damaging the interests of their opponents, and to get returned in their favour members pledged so thickly to themselves as to cease to be independent members of the Legislature. This action of the Government in stamping the country in this way I condemn in the strongest terms, as being not only objectionable in itself, but thoroughly unconstitutional. The Government, in their action, have not only availed themselves of their powers of suasion to influence the elections; but they have, in the most flagrant manner, used the powers of their office to influence the constituencies, and to influence the future constitution of Parliament. When the Hon. the Premier sent that telegram to the West Coast on the eve of an election, promising to the inhabitants of that locality a railway condemned by the officers of the Government, and which would involve the country in an expenditure of over one million and a quarter sterling—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Two millions.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—My honorable friend says two millions. Was the Premier, in promising that railway, not using the powers of his office with a view of influencing the elections of this country? When on the eve of the election he placed himself in communication with the Chairman of the County Council of the Thames, where he was about to stand as a candidate, and sent that gentleman back with £11,000 in his pocket, as what he was pleased to call the money given to him in fulfilment of unfulfilled promises—£11,000 given at a time when the Treasury notoriously did not possess funds at its disposal to enable it to pay, as they fell due, the current liabilities—was he not then using the powers of his office to control the elections? The Government went further. When, after a vote of this branch of the Legislature, condemning a certain railway as opposed to both the letter and the spirit of the law, and after the action of the Government had been condemned in one of the charges against them by the other branch of the Legislature—when in the face of these facts

the Government upon the eve of the elections entered into two fresh contracts for two fresh sections of that railway, were not the Government exercising the powers of their office with the view of influencing the elections? When the Government took at their own disposal the service of the two steamers belonging to the country—the “Hinemoa” and the “Stella”—when one went north and the other south in order that facilities might be given to Ministers for creating an agitation throughout the country—when they availed themselves of the services of these vessels—services which were to be paid for at the cost of the country—again I ask, were they not availing themselves of the powers of their office to control in an improper manner the elections of the country? When the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, at a time when there were not in the Treasury sufficient funds to pay with regularity the claims falling due, and when the Government were obliged to postpone payment of claims due to their creditors—when, accompanied by the Native Minister, he hurried, on the eve of an election, to Napier, ostensibly to drive the first pile of a bridge, but really to create an opposition to the candidates who were then in the field as against the Government—I ask, were not he and his colleague availing themselves of the powers of their office to influence the elections there? And I will ask the same question with reference to a telegram that has created some sensation throughout the country. When the Colonial Secretary encouraged the opponent of a former sitting member for one of the constituencies, and when he promised him that even in case of defeat his interests should be regarded—and we know that the promise was a seat in this Council—when in this way, by holding out a promise of a seat in this Council, he endeavoured to influence the constituencies in the choice of a representative, was he not using the powers of his office improperly to influence the elections of the country? One might easily swell the indictment against Ministers, but I will refer only to one other point. That is in connection with the Native Minister. When he, at an expense from which many princes would have shrunk, for the purpose of starting an opposition to a member for another district, rushed through from Tauranga to Clive by special coach, was he not then using the powers of his office in order to influence an election in an improper manner? No person can have made himself acquainted with the circumstances to which I have referred without feeling that in these matters the Ministry have, in a most flagrant manner—and I might add, if the term were not unparliamentary, in the most unscrupulous manner—endeavoured to influence the elections. I ask whether such conduct is not calculated to strike a blow at the independence of the Legislature—whether such conduct should be allowed to pass without being condemned in the strongest terms possible. Nearly a hundred years ago somewhat similar conduct was adopted by the Ministry then in power in England; and the action taken by that Ministry called forth a resolution, which was passed by the Legislature, and which is so strikingly applicable to the pro-

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ceedings of the Ministry in this colony lately that, although it has appeared in print elsewhere, I will not hesitate to read it to the Council. The resolution is as follows:—

“That it is highly criminal in any Minister or Ministers, or other servants under the Crown, directly or indirectly to use the powers of office in the election of representatives to serve in Parliament; and an attempt at such influence will at all times be resisted by this House, as aimed at its honor, dignity, and independence, as an infringement of the dearest right of every subject throughout the empire, and as tending to sap the basis of its Constitution.”

The action taken by this Ministry in the cases to which I have referred is action that ought to be resisted by Parliament. It is action which is calculated to injure the honor, the dignity, and the independence of Parliament. They have infringed the dearest right of every subject throughout the country, and have endeavoured, to the best of their ability, to deal a deadly blow at the basis of the Constitution of the country. We are, unfortunately, not in a position to efficiently punish the Government for its action, which deserves to have applied to it the term “highly criminal,” as it is applied in the resolution of the House of Commons which I have just read. There can be no doubt about it—their action has been highly criminal; and, though there may be no law enabling us to deal with such conduct as it deserves, still I think it will have the effect of eliciting condemnation in the strongest terms from every well-thinking lover of his country. We have, it is true, no means of punishing such proceedings here, but, nevertheless, there are constitutional countries where such conduct would be dealt with in a more decided manner than we are able to deal with it. The Colonial Secretary does not altogether approve of the references that I make from time to time to the experience of English-speaking communities like ours in America, but I will not thereby be deterred from again making reference thereto. There is in the Constitution of the State of California a distinct provision framed with the view of meeting crimes of the character to which I have referred; and it declares that if any person endeavour to influence the Legislature by promises of office, by promises of reward, or by threats and intimidation, he shall be liable to punishment for felony—liable to imprisonment for two years with hard labour. The conduct of Ministers, to which I have referred, is conduct coming within that law; and happy it is indeed for the members of the Government—for the Colonial Secretary and the Premier—that they live, not in the State of California, but in the Colony of New Zealand. I cannot but think that when the honorable gentlemen, in a moment of piety, thank Divine Providence for mercies received, they will include within these mercies the privilege of not having been born in a State like that. There are just one or two matters in the Speech to which I will refer. I cannot take the same view of the financial condition of the country that has been taken by my honorable friend Mr. Wood. I cannot think that the posi-

tion is thoroughly sound, merely because Ministers have stated so. It will be time enough to give an opinion as to the condition of this colony when we cease borrowing. So long as we are borrowing as we are, it is utterly impossible to say what is the position of the colony. We are at the present time spending £3,000,000 of borrowed money every year. That is equal to the introduction into Great Britain of £200,000,000 a year. If such a sum were annually introduced into Great Britain, what would be the result? What inflation, what apparent prosperity! Yet that is our position at the present time; and while this expenditure is going on, while we are introducing borrowed money to the extent we are, it is premature to state that our condition is sound. When we shall have contracted our borrowing we shall be in a better position to judge of the financial condition of the colony. With regard to these three great liberal measures which are being displayed before the eyes of the eager public with such loud pretensions, we are told that if these were adopted “the power of legislation would then largely rest in the hands of the people.” What is the meaning of the phrase? At the present time, does not that power rest entirely in the hands of the people? We have no governing class in this community. If we have a governing class at all, it is a very small one—it is, in fact, the Premier himself, who wishes to govern the country as he pleases: but, so far as legislation is concerned, the choice of the legislation is entirely in the hands of the people of New Zealand; and, if the constitutional privileges which are promised in this Speech are granted, the benefit will be exceedingly small. There are already something like ninety thousand electors out of less than half a million people; and, surely, if this is the case, the power of legislation may be said to be entirely in the hands of the people. It is not my intention to refer to these three points of the great constitutional charter promised in the Speech, further than to say this: that personally I attach comparatively little importance to them, and their only importance in my mind arises from a desire to see them finally and effectually settled. I would far sooner see them at once and for ever settled than that they should be left in the present state, and that it should be in the power of stump orators to go round the country, raising class against class with the false assertion that one class is more privileged than another. I listened with a good deal of astonishment to two or three paragraphs referring to Native affairs. I must say, when I heard them I could not help thinking that it was impossible for the power of audacity to go further than it has gone in this matter. The Speech says,—

“The assurance which I was enabled to give to the members of Parliament at the opening of the last session, in regard to the peaceful and loyal action of the Native people generally, has been borne out by the results.”

Why, Sir, what has been done? These Native matters have been simply going on from bad to worse. There has been no control over them at all. The Natives have by degrees learned altogether to ignore our Courts of law. They have

learned to take matters into their own hands; and we have looked idly on, and, in fact, we have had to appeal to them to assist us in our difficulties, and have asked their unauthorized Courts to come to our help. When we last met we had but one Native difficulty—that was on the West Coast. That was bad enough, and I have no hesitation in saying that while it continues there can be no permanent peace in the colony. The Speech says,—

“No further development has taken place of the fanatical movement on the West Coast, and the tribes concerned appear to be quietly awaiting the action of the Parliament and of the ordinary Courts of law.

“Steps are being taken for the holding of a full inquiry into the existence and extent of the alleged unfulfilled promises in regard to lands.”

Alleged unfulfilled promises! As if there were any doubt on the subject! What the Natives ask—and they ask as a right—is, not that the Government will go into alleged unfulfilled promises made by persons of whom the Government are not aware, but that the Government will make inquiries as to what steps have been taken to fulfil the obligations entered into by the Proclamation of confiscation. That is what the Natives want. That Proclamation under the hand of Sir George Grey most distinctly reserved to the loyal Natives the lands they held, and distinctly declared that reserves should be set aside for those who had no land. This has never been done; and these are the promises that the Natives wish to have inquired into—not an inquiry as to what Sir Donald McLean or any one else promised, but the obligations undertaken under the hand of Sir George Grey. Until this is done there is no hope that Native affairs on the West Coast will become peaceful. That nothing has been done since Parliament last met is in itself disgraceful. But, while our difficulties on the West Coast remain as embarrassing as ever, we have now difficulties in many other directions. Events move on so rapidly that we are apt to forget the progress even of current history; and it is well sometimes to have matters recalled to our attention in order that the leading features may not be lost sight of. Now, there is the shooting of the surveyors at Te Aroha. We are in a position to form some judgment upon that subject. It appears that the Government had bought the interest or rights of certain Natives in some land before there had been sufficient inquiry into the ownership of the land. Nevertheless they ordered the surveyors to survey the land. There were contending claimants, and the land had never been passed through the Court.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I think the honorable gentleman is wrong. The land had been passed through the Court.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—The honorable gentleman cannot be aware of the circumstances. The land had not been passed through the Court, and these claimants proceeded to stop the survey, and undoubtedly tried to take the life of one of the survey party. Immediately the news of this occurrence reached Auckland the Native Minister proceeded to the locality. He at once told us, in language to which we are

somewhat accustomed, that there was no political significance in the matter, but at the same time he showed it was his intention to make political capital out of it, and he added he would avail himself of the opportunity of demanding from the Natives the right to make telegraphs, railways, and roads through the land. Although there was no political significance in it, he would avail himself of the opportunity of punishing the innocent for the guilty. On arriving at the Thames he ordered a detachment of police to proceed to the apprehension of the offenders. They had not proceeded far when they found it would be dangerous to go further, and they decided under the circumstances that it was desirable to retire to Grahamstown. The Native Minister seems to have been somewhat taken aback by this occurrence; but he spoke no less vigorously. He intimated that, in consequence of the fresh aspect of affairs, it might be necessary to confiscate this land. The Government possessed no power to confiscate an acre, yet the distinct statement was made and telegraphed throughout the colony that the Native Minister contemplated having recourse to this extreme and illegal measure. However, he proceeded no further. He seems to have been daunted by the opposition this step was likely to arouse, and he contented himself with enrolling and placing upon daily pay a number of the independent electors of the Thames, whose suffrages he was about to seek; and these men he kept at the Thames. It was found that they had little experience, that in fact they could not load their muskets, and that it would be rather dangerous to send them out against men who were at least able to handle muskets with considerable advantage. They were therefore detained at the Thames on daily pay, and there they still are on daily pay. If their services are not required to put down the Maoris, they will at any rate be available for the election shortly to take place. The next step taken by the Native Minister was to call together a tribunal altogether unknown to the law, and to place the matter in the hands of this body. The Native chiefs were summoned, and they were constituted a Court to inquire into the circumstances of the case. Even Government officers attended and gave testimony. The matter entirely passed out from the Native Office, and passed into the hands of the Native chiefs. I believe we might use with great advantage the services of the Native chiefs, and that it is a pity we do not put more power into their hands; but it is time enough to do so when our laws have been altered so as to give validity to any course that may be adopted. At this time this Court was unknown to the law, and it was highly improper that it should have been deputed by the Native Minister to try this matter. Well, the Court met, and the decision was much the same as might have been expected. It was decided that the action of the Government was wrong—that this land had never passed through the Native Land Court, and that the Government ought not to buy land before it had passed through the Court. The Court further decided that the action of the Natives would

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have been right, under such circumstances, in taking the matter into their own hands and shooting down the surveyors, had those surveyors been Maoris; but, seeing that the man shot was not a Maori, but a European, to that extent they were wrong, and had brought themselves within the law of the land; and it was recommended that the offenders should surrender themselves. This was the result of the Court—the men were recommended to give themselves up. And while the elections were going on it appeared that these men were going to surrender themselves, and flaming telegrams were sent about the country to that effect. One of these stated that this shooting affair was the best thing that could have happened; it was to be of immense advantage to the country. But what has been the result? The matter has been going on a long time, and this is the net result: The action of the Government has been condemned by the Court; and now we hear that two pias have been erected, and the Natives are openly defying the law. That is the upshot, while in the Speech we are coolly told,—

“Two intertribal disturbances, arising out of disputed claims to land, have occurred, in one instance attended with loss of life. The necessary measures are being taken to vindicate the law.”

I have given a plain, unvarnished story of the state of affairs on the East Coast, and honorable members can judge for themselves how far that statement is in accordance with the view presented by the Government in that paragraph. And what is the other intertribal affair? It is a dispute among the Ngapuhi. Now, the Ngapuhi for the last thirty-seven years have been the most loyal Natives in New Zealand. We have always felt that the English law was reigning through the Ngapuhi's land—that a generation had grown up who had learned to respect the English law; but such has been the effect of the two years' power of the present Government that these people now ignore the English law. They take matters into their own hands, and fight amongst themselves; several men are killed, and others are wounded; and all about matters which, did we possess the confidence of the Natives, would have been adjudicated upon in our Courts of law. I wish we could believe these were the only cases in which there were indications of our having lost the confidence of the Natives. Only the other day, however, there was a telegram to the effect that a surveyor had been ordered off at another point, the Maoris telling him that the King refused to recognize the *aukati* line, and claimed the whole of the Island. One cannot see what is taking place all around without seeing that by the continuance of the present Administration in office the European *mana*—the European prestige—is being entirely destroyed; and with a race like the Maoris you cannot destroy that prestige without laying the colony open to great and serious evils. I will not occupy the time of the Council further, for other members will probably wish to say a few words upon the Address. I regard this session as likely to be one of great importance in the annals of this colony, and I

must say I sincerely reciprocate the desire of His Excellency that in all our proceedings we shall be guided by a spirit of wisdom and sound judgment.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—Sir, the honorable gentleman has, in accordance with his annual custom, made an attack upon this as he does upon all Governments, of a singularly acrimonious description, the consequence of his well-known personal disposition and predilection for the extreme in criticism. I do not suppose the honorable gentleman really thinks one-half of what he says, or that his judgment really commends the superlatives he employs. If I am wrong, and if we may be said to judge others by ourselves, he must be a very unhappy man. The honorable gentleman began by stating that the appeal recently made to the constituencies was not an appeal from a condemnation on account of measures, but entirely on account of the administration of the Government. The honorable gentleman must be well aware that it is not only quite within what may be considered fair-play, but also within the strictest practice of parliamentary precedent, that a Government appealing to the country should take exactly its own ground in such an appeal. There are plenty of instances of Ministries being displaced upon personal grounds, but electing to go to the country not upon personal grounds, but upon political grounds. Of course the two things cannot be very well separated. The present Government believed that any excuse to remove a Government that proposed certain measures would undoubtedly be used in Parliament; and, even with the advantage of the hypercritical faculty which the honorable gentleman possesses, and that immense fund of invective he can always draw upon, he did not make out such a case as would justify the people of this country in rejecting the appeal of the Ministry from the dictum of the Houses on what their own common sense told them was the real question between the parties. In point of fact, our measures are distasteful to certain persons, and those certain persons take what, I admit, is a very fair political way to upset them, by endeavouring to turn the Government out of office for alleged faults of administration. I do not think the honorable gentleman need have put so much stress upon that; because he knows that what I say is the fact. When the honorable gentleman gets up and talks about organized hypocrisy, and indulges in language of that description, one can hardly avoid smiling at the unnecessary vehemence of his expressions. The honorable gentleman says that what is really put to the country is, whether personal or constitutional government is to exist in this country. If that were the question, there would be very few people who would hesitate on which side they ought to cast their votes; but the only personality in this case is the personality of the Premier, who is unpopular with the honorable member, as he is with some other persons. It is almost an impossibility for a man to fill a great place in public life for so extended a period of years as the Premier has done so without making a very great many enemies, and it is undoubtedly a drawback to his

political position that these enemies rise up in times like these. The "snarling of the cur" theory is justified to a certain extent in our race, and when a statesman is supposed to be powerless there are plenty who bark at his heels. In no other way can I understand this "personality." I have seen nothing to justify that expression in the government of the last two years, except as regards Native affairs, in which I quite admit the Native Minister and the Premier have been allowed a greater latitude than would have been the case in any other branch of government; and in that we have followed the exact precedent of all Governments since 1869, when this paternal system of governing the Natives was introduced.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—No, no.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I say Yes. When the honorable gentleman opposite himself went on a tour through the interior of the country he spoke in a way he could not have spoken without a Cabinet Council in respect of any other branch of administration. The necessity of things is such that, if affairs are to be managed in that way, the Native Minister must be allowed a great deal more latitude than any other Minister. And it becomes a speciality. Take any man and put him in as Native Minister for five years: why, in that time even my honorable friend would in the end be quite indistinguishable from the Native Office official. I do not accept the blame, on behalf of the Government, of the departmental policy of the Native Department. I consider that that has been forced upon this Government. The honorable gentleman charges the Government with having grossly misconducted the elections. The honorable gentleman has been speaking about matters of fact which he either does not know, or as to which his credulity has been imposed upon. He has either misunderstood what he has been told, or is ignorant of what he is talking about, or has been made the victim of very gross imposition; for there has been no such interference with the elections as he would lead this Council to believe. I have not any information about the £11,000. He tells me, and for the first time I hear it, that the Mayor of Grahamstown carried back the sum of £11,000. I entirely disbelieve such a statement. The honorable gentleman said the Government had not at that time in the Treasury sufficient to meet its current engagements. If that was the case, where did the money come from, and what on earth were the Auditors thinking about? Then came the Press advertisements, which are heard of at every session of Parliament. All the Press men on one side call out because they do not get enough, and when they change places you hear the same cry from newspaper men on the other side. That same thing has happened during the whole of the seventeen years I have been in politics. As a fact, the advertisements are distributed by the Government on perfectly fair principles, and on a perfectly defensible and easily-understood system.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Oh, oh!

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—The honorable gentleman opposite no doubt sympathizes

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with the Press. He is aware that in this town there are two morning newspapers. He understands specially about one of them. Well, every dog has his day. That dog had its day, and now the other dog has its day. I am sorry to say that there are a great many political gentlemen intimately connected with newspapers who do not think this too small a matter to growl about. The principle is one of open tender. One morning paper in each part of the colony got the provincial *Gazette* notices by tender, and the other advertisements are, generally speaking, given to the same newspaper: not in all cases, however, because some have to be more widely circulated than in the provincial *Gazette*—that is to say, a notification requiring to be advertised in Dunedin, Invercargill, and Oamaru would be published in each of those places. The choice is a fair one, when all things are equal; and I take it for granted that, should the Government—as I have no fear it will—yield its place to another, we shall see the newspaper outcry not lessened, but the papers which complain changed. That is the Press influence which the Government has had, and it is not at all different from the Press influence of all other Governments. It is by no means an invariable rule that the Government is supported by those newspapers which have the advertisements as the provincial *Gazette*. Then, as to the steamers, the honorable gentleman amplified things. He stated that the "Stella" went south, and the "Hinemoa" went north. All the "Stella" did was to go straight to the lighthouses in the South, after the prorogation; and she has not yet returned. The "Hinemoa," on the other hand, was never used until the Premier came back from Lyttelton to go to Auckland. He made that one voyage, and back as far as Wellington; and in doing that, even, there was a certain amount of requirement for that voyage, independently of his trip. I do not think the honorable gentleman is strictly correct in supposing that there is no precedent for a Premier speaking in two or three different parts of the country during an election. The honorable gentlemen will find that I am correct in saying that Lord Palmerston, when it was a matter of personal election, did speak in several different places. The Premier was the only member of the Ministry who took this sort of part in the elections. Most of the other Ministers were away at their separate electorates to be elected, but the Premier was the only one who went outside the actual constituency he was dealing with; and I conceive he was fully justified in doing so. Then the honorable gentlemen said that we had influenced the public by the use of the telegraph. There has been a great deal said about one telegram, but, so long as the telegraph is used in reason, and paid for, in election matters, I cannot see why, because the Government have less time at their disposal than their opponents, they may also not use the telegraph. That former Governments have been in the habit of using it the honorable member knows full well, because, in the proceedings of a Committee in 1871, he will find that Mr. Fox admitted he had both sent and

received some seventeen or twenty telegrams on these subjects during the elections, and in a few mild words of the report the Committee rather deprecate that course for the future. So that it is not quite unheard-of. The Native Department, the honorable gentleman says, has been a lever during these elections. On the contrary, it has been a very great drawback to the Government, because it has been a point of honor with the Government not to commit the country to anything until Parliament assembled, so that our successors might have a *carte blanche* to begin with. If the Government had done anything which might have brought about hostilities, that would have been a very great embarrassment to the country during the elections. That is the only way in which the Native Department has affected the Government. Then, as to the Armed Constabulary Department. In what respect that has helped the Government I think the honorable gentleman will find it exceedingly difficult to show. He cannot say I used them for force, or that I put him in the guard-room to prevent his very active electioneering during these troubled times, or that I employed any voters in the Force. The honorable gentleman cannot prove political bias in a single movement, so far as the Armed Constabulary are concerned. He cannot show that I have given greater protection here or there, or that any changes or appointments of any kind were made during the elections. The honorable gentleman says there were the seats in the Legislative Council which also might have assisted the Government in gaining power. The honorable gentleman knows perfectly well that, by express memorandum of His Excellency, we were debarred from using that; and therefore he cannot justify that ground of attack. When he says that the other side were not only embarrassed from having no money, but through having inconvenient consciences, he really makes me smile. He knows that the money lay on the other side, and that it was wealth fighting against the people without wealth. And, secondly, as regards consciences, the less the honorable gentleman says about that the better, I think. Then the honorable gentleman talks about the action of the Government being unprecedented, except in the case of Victoria. I suppose he wished to show that the course of the Government has been gravitating towards the Victorian example. I only hope he is wrong. I see no indication of it, and I should very much regret it if it were so. The honorable gentleman says the Premier sent a telegram promising a railway to cost two millions of money, and he asked, was not that an abuse of his office? No doubt it would be if it were true, but the honorable gentleman knows that what he says is not true.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I do not say it is not a fact that the Premier sent a telegram promising a railway, but I say that that was not a promise to induce support, because it was the gift of this Parliament, and of all who took part in the passing of the Railways Construction Bill, and the cost is estimated at £900,000. That is the exact position of that railway. The Premier, I presume,

was asked by some public body whether he was not going to give effect to the wishes of Parliament. Parliament had decided that this work was to be done, and probably the Premier was asked whether the Government intended to give effect to that decision, and probably the answer of the Premier was that the Government would build that railway, as it was bound to do by law. If it is stated that the Premier endeavoured to influence support by beginning a new railway at a cost of two millions, that, I say, is an incorrect statement, and entirely wrong. I know nothing about the story of the Mayor of the Thames going away with £11,000. I will venture to say it is not the case. I am quite certain of this: either the Mayor was entitled to it, or else the Auditors did not do their duty, if he got money to which he was not entitled. That is the best answer I can give to the statement of the honorable gentleman. The honorable gentleman says that, the action of the Government in regard to the Thames Railway being condemned by the Legislature, they should not have continued making the railway. That railway was in the same position as any other railway. The understanding was that the railways were to be continued on a *pro rata* scale: a certain amount of money was voted for the quarter, and the rate of progress was to be kept up as before. There has just been the ordinary rate of progress on that railway, and no more.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—May I ask what railway you are speaking about?

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I am speaking of all railways, including the Thames Railway.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—There never has been a vote of any kind for the Thames Railway.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—That is a statement the Government do not admit. That line stands on all-fours with all other railways. Having commenced the railway, the Government were bound to continue it like other lines. The honorable gentleman made great capital out of the circumstance that, when one piece of colonial expenditure in Hawke's Bay was incurred, I hurried up to take part in the ceremony of driving the first pile. I went up with the ordinary steamer, and was away the shortest number of days I could possibly be. I went to see a work inaugurated which, for two years, at all events, had been promised, and delayed all that time. When at last everything was ready, very much later than we had hoped for, I went up to a place where I had lived for so many years to see the celebration; and I cannot see how the honorable gentleman can make out that there was anything improper about that. The fact of the elections coming off about that time was the purest of accidents. I was up there three months after the session before last, and promised then that I would come up to drive the first pile shortly before the opening of the next session. It so happened that they could not get the plans ready until Parliament met. The time for receiving tenders did not expire until Parliament rose, and the work was immediately put in hand. I went up with no idea of influencing the elections any more than at any other time. The honorable gentleman said something about

my telegram to Mr. Ingles. I am not at all ashamed of that telegram. I am ashamed to think that any one could have behaved in such an unworthy manner as to abstract it, garble it, conceal it, bring it forward when too late to contradict it, and put all sorts of constructions on the words it contained. It is true that there was a political promise connected with it; but there are persons who have minds to conceive something much lower than that, even of a high-minded gentleman like Mr. Ingles. Personally, for years I could have wished to see Mr. Ingles in this Council. Up to that time I had never had an opportunity of bringing his name before my colleagues; but I certainly did tell Mr. Ingles that, as I had been requested by the party to ask him to make a certain sacrifice for it, the party would consider his claims upon it if he complied. I should like to know what this Council would lose by having Mr. Ingles sitting on its benches. But I did not alone mean that I had another possible seat in my mind. I did not even ask Mr. Ingles to express himself very warmly in favour of the party. I just simply put before him what I thought was a very fair question in politics to ask—whether he would take a certain course to oblige a certain party—and added that if he did he would be very likely to have that party's support hereafter. As it happened, he refused. If all questions of future party support were dealt with in a straightforward way like that, I think we should have nothing to blush at. If nothing worse than that were said to candidates by Governments, I think no hypercritical person would find anything to object to in their behaviour. The honorable gentleman, referring to the Native Minister, speaks of expense at which princes would shrink. I suppose the honorable gentleman has been beguiled by something which he has seen in the newspapers. I believe the Native Minister came in the ordinary coach over a difficult journey, and, if he came by night as well as by day, I suppose it was all the more wearisome to the Native Minister. The honorable gentleman says he regrets that he has no power to punish those who do anything which displeases him, as the actions of the Native Minister appear to have done. When the honorable gentleman is speaking he always gives me the idea that he would like to have the power to punish. The honorable gentleman speaks with such a degree of earnestness that really one regrets he had not the birch in his hand. I observe that I am one of those whom the honorable gentleman would like to incarcerate for a term at hard labour. All the honorable gentleman says in conclusion I think could be accepted by persons on either side of politics. It is a fair question in what position the colony is financially; but, whatever that position may be, whether we have borrowed too much or not, whether the position of property-holders may become unbearable or not from taxation, still I believe that of New Zealand is essentially sound. The present property-holders might even pass away; but the land will produce as much as ever. It is possible that by the great public works policy, of which we have heard so much

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said, or, rather, by the abuse of that policy, a reaction may be experienced by those who least expect it, and property may suffer very much from the extravagance of the past few years. But the colony will produce more every year. The productive power of the colony is of illimitable extent. The honorable gentleman says he thinks it is a very great thing to get these three points in the charter settled. I think nothing would be more desirable, because we must come to something almost more important immediately. We have to put our house in order, and we shall have to make a very great effort in the immediate future. The next year or two years will certainly tell upon our strength, and we shall have to practise, as well as to preach, economy. It is not at such a time as this that class should be arrayed against class, or party against party, when all of us, in so far as in us lies, should co-operate. Unless commercial affairs in Europe revive, we must all bear very heavy burdens for some time to come. I will not go into the question of Native affairs on the East Coast, for this simple reason: that it has been the study of the Government not to prejudice the Native position till the political question is settled. That it is unfortunate that this outrage should have occurred everybody will readily allow: still it is not a matter that even political hostility should entitle any one to exaggerate or gloat over. It is a misfortune that it occurred; but still nothing short of degrading ourselves, giving away our privileges, or allowing our persons or property to be violated by the Natives, should draw us into war while this loan is unsettled. It would be calculated to produce a very bad effect if it were supposed we were going to war. Moreover, I think it would be exceedingly impolitic, while Parliament is sitting, to take any steps that could be deferred which might lead to a conflict. During the sitting of Parliament the Executive is not free enough to attend to such a matter properly. Here I may state my belief that, even if an outbreak should ever again occur in this country, it would be put down within a short time; so that it could be easily stamped out during a recess. Then the honorable gentleman said that the Native Minister had employed a number of the electors of the Thames, and had placed them on full pay as a military force. Well, these men are at Ohinemuri, and are Thames electors. But the number is very small, and they are entitled to a capitation grant. They are a company whose services I at first declined to accept, but afterwards, when the Volunteer financial year commenced, I did accept them. They had hardly got their arms, and they had no drill instructor for a time, and consequently they had not been very well drilled; but there was no ground for the statement of some person in the newspaper that they could not fire their arms. Since then drill has been going on, and I saw a report a few days ago in which I was told they were making good progress towards efficiency. Their pay is but 2s. 6d. per day on the days they attend to drill, and that is not an unreasonable amount of pay, seeing that they live upon the frontier. It was not to be expected

that they would leave their work and go to drill for nothing. I cannot conceive how any Thames electors could be influenced by that. I find I was in error in stating to-day that this land had been passed through the Court. The land was bought by the late Government, and the survey was therefore being proceeded with on land which was supposed to have been bought up a long time ago. Then the honorable gentleman said that this Court to which the Native Minister submitted the case was quite unknown to the law; and so on. Why, the Native Minister never submitted it to any Court. He never gave over the prisoners to be tried as regards their crime. He invoked the aid of the chiefs of Hauraki, in consequence of their having expressed sympathy with the Government, to find out these persons and induce them to submit themselves to the law; and, in doing that, he was only following the precedents in which the Hauraki chiefs have assisted the Government. It was not for a moment supposed that the men would be tried by their own semi-barbarous law, but by the strict law of England. I have not seen the judgment, so I cannot say whether it was so worded that the outrage was made to appear as a crime if directed against a European, but not if directed against a Maori; but in any case such a wording would not influence this or any other Government. I believe the Maoris shot that man in mistake for a half-caste; but there is no particular point in that. Whether they fired at a Maori or a European, to the Government it would have been the same. Then the honorable gentleman went on to the Ngapuhi dispute, and said that two years' tenure of office by this Government had turned that ordinarily law-abiding tribe into a set of men who care nothing for European laws. I should have thought the honorable gentleman had read our history enough to know that these tribes have been continually fighting among themselves. This is not the first time by two or three since I have been in the country that they have been engaged in such disputes. These tribal feuds between the two great sections of the northern Natives have occurred very frequently, and in times past have been very bloody. An outbreak among these people is nothing very new, and does not threaten any further disturbances of the country than we have seen at different times during the last twenty years. The effect is purely local. With regard to the telegram about which the honorable gentleman was so much concerned, and in which he says some surveyor was told he must go away because the King had established his *aukati* over the whole Island, I may say this: There has been sprung up lately a new and, no doubt, a very amusing kind of literature. Telegrams from the Press Agency and other associations are highly flavoured for the evening papers. They are sensational—that is all that can be said for them; but, as people like sensational telegrams, they are to be found in all the colonial newspapers. This telegram was one of that class. I may tell the honorable gentleman that the King has not attempted any such movement, but, on the contrary, the last we have heard of the King has been of a

highly reassuring character, for he not only does not take any part in the affairs of the Bay of Plenty, but has expressed a strong opinion against the tribe which fired upon the surveyors. Well, Sir, last session we had this whole question out. These very measures which are now before us, and more especially this great Native question, were all fully discussed, so that it is hardly necessary to go into them again; but I must entirely repudiate the kind construction upon my political actions which the honorable gentleman has placed upon them, and assure him he has been very badly informed if he really believes in the existence of one-half the corruption which he attributes to the Government.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN—Sir, I should like to say a word or two before the mover replies. While agreeing with the first few paragraphs of the Address in Reply, I must take exception to that which states that we are glad to hear Native affairs are in a satisfactory condition. I differ from that altogether. I consider that Native affairs have assumed a very serious aspect, and, when we are told that steps have been taken to vindicate the law, I must say I fail to see that such has been done. I am very glad to see that the Government propose to bring in a Bill for triennial Parliaments. It is a step in the right direction. The Speech has the following:—

“A very general desire appears to exist that consideration should be given to the best means of promoting manufactures and local industries in this colony.”

I agree with that. I believe there is a very general feeling in favour of it, and that feeling has been expressed to the candidates during the recent election. I believe that a large number of the members of the House of Representatives are pledged to carry out these views. I know that in the North, and I believe in Canterbury also, it is the strong desire of the people that encouragement should be given to manufactures and local industries. The paragraph goes on,—

“With a view to give effect to this desire, you may probably think it advisable to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the subject.”

I fail to see that the Government are going to give practical effect to this general desire; for, instead of any measures being proposed, the Speech goes on to say, as a sort of blind to the people, “You may probably think it advisable to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into and report upon the subject.” What does that mean? Nothing at all. The Committee may probably be appointed, and, if the Government approve of the encouragement of manufacturing industry, some effect may be given to its recommendations; but, if the Government do not approve of the principle of encouraging manufactures, the report of the Committee will fall to the ground, and its time will simply be lost. I say this much: From what I have gathered lately, in conversation with one of the members of the Government, I feel confident this paragraph is simply a blind to catch the support of many members of the other House.

The Hon. Mr. WOOD.—I desire to inform the

Council that I have no wish to reply at length. My reason for arriving at this decision is that, although I listened with sorrow to the very strong charges brought by the honorable member opposite against the Government, yet I think those charges were so completely met and answered by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary that it is altogether unnecessary to take up the time of the Council by saying anything further on the matter.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 30th September, 1879.

First Readings—Gaol Officials—Architects in Public Service—Hamilton-Te Aroha Railway—Canterbury Deferred Payments—Fire Brigades—Fortnightly Payment of Workmen—Deaf and Dumb Institution—Nelson Creek Bridge—East Coast Mail Service—Public Reserves Sales—Address in Reply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Oamaru Waterworks Loan Bill, Slaughterhouses Bill, On-hunga Water Reserve Bill, Waiuku Recreation Reserve Bill, Ashburton County Council Waterworks Bill, Napier Church Lands Trust Bill, Special Settlements Bill, Land Bill, Resident Magistrates Bill, District Courts Bill, Napier and Manawatu Recreation Ground Bill.

GAOL OFFICIALS.

Mr. TOLE asked the Minister of Justice, If the Government will put on the estimates a sufficient sum to equalize the salaries of the officers of the gaols of the colony? He was fully aware of the difficulty which existed in a case of this kind, on account of the great variety in the remuneration of these officers all over the colony. It was not so much a question of money as one of general adjustment of salaries. The present inequality was considered a very great grievance. In the session of 1878 the Gaols Committee expressed a very strong opinion on the subject. They said, "It appears that the cost of official salaries at Dunedin is double that at Wellington and Lyttelton, and three times that at Auckland." The difference seemed to be more against Auckland than any other part of the colony, and, as an Auckland man, and the gaol being situated in his district, he had thought it his duty to put this question on the Order Paper. The Minister of Justice said last year that it would require about £700 to make an adjustment of salaries, and his (Mr. Toles) object in asking this question was to get, if possible, an assurance from the Minister that what was considered a very great grievance would be remedied.

Mr. SHEEHAN, in reply, said it was the intention of the Government to ask the House to sanction a scheme for equalizing these salaries; not necessarily making them the same in amount, but equalizing them in proportion to the requirements of the different establishments. When the House was in Committee on the estimates, the

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Government would lay all the necessary information before them for that purpose.

ARCHITECTS IN PUBLIC SERVICE.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether, in the public service, there are at present any architects who are allowed to compete for private practice; and, if so, whether the Government intend to continue permission to those officers to undertake private practice?

Mr. MACANDREW said there were no architects in the public service who were allowed private practice. The regulations provided against their taking such practice. He was not aware of any instance.

HAMILTON-TE AROHA RAILWAY.

Mr. WHYTE asked the Minister for Public Works, Why the Government has not yet commenced the construction of any portion of the line of railway from Hamilton to Te Aroha?

Mr. MACANDREW said it was felt that it would be useless to commence this railway until the bridge over the Waikato was constructed, so that the plant could be taken across.

CANTERBURY DEFERRED PAYMENTS.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister of Lands, What blocks of Crown lands in the Land District of Canterbury have been set aside for sale on deferred payments under "The Land Act, 1877," and what is the estimated area of such blocks; the dates of the Proclamations setting aside such blocks; and the number of selectors located on such blocks?

Mr. THOMSON replied that four blocks of land in Canterbury had been set aside on deferred payments. The total area of the blocks was 7,393 acres. The Proclamation setting them aside was dated 8th October, 1878. He was sorry to say that only two allotments had been taken up, each allotment comprising 320 acres. But this was owing to the rather poor nature of the land. The free-selection system had all along prevailed in the Province of Canterbury, and the greater part—indeed, almost the whole—of the good land had therefore been taken up. The land now in the hands of the Government was of rather inferior quality; but it was hoped that, when the deferred-payment land was reduced in price, which he hoped would shortly be the case, these and other lands of inferior quality would be taken up.

FIRE BRIGADES.

Mr. RICHMOND asked the Government, Whether they will place the members of fire brigades in the same position with regard to capitulation as the Volunteer forces?

Sir G. GREY said the question was rather a large one. The Government would take the subject into consideration, and, when they had determined what course should be pursued, they would inform the House.

FORTNIGHTLY PAYMENT OF WORKMEN.

Mr. SWANSON asked the Government, Whether they will make provision, in any future

contracts, for the workmen being paid at least every fortnight?

Mr. MACANDREW, in reply, said that there was a clause in the General Conditions of Contracts which provided that workmen of all grades should be paid once a fortnight. That condition was now made part of the specification. He would have a circular sent round calling special attention to it.

Mr. SWANSON would like to ask how long this clause had been in existence.

Mr. MACANDREW was not certain, but for some time past. He thought it was the 23rd clause of the General Conditions.

DEAF-AND-DUMB INSTITUTION.

Mr. FULTON asked the Minister of Education, What steps the Government propose to take towards the establishment of a deaf-and-dumb institution for the colony; and whether the services of a competent instructor have been secured by the Agent-General? The latter part of the question, he was aware, had been already answered in papers which had been printed and laid on the table by the Government.

Sir G. GREY said, as the honorable gentleman had already the information in his possession, he need state nothing more on the subject.

Mr. FULTON said he asked, in the first part of his question, what steps the Government proposed to take towards the establishment of a deaf-and-dumb institution.

Sir G. GREY replied that the Government intended to establish a deaf-and-dumb institution, and that the instructor who would manage the establishment was expected to arrive in December next.

NELSON CREEK BRIDGE.

Mr. MASTERS asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will lay before this House all correspondence, petitions, and telegrams relating to or connected with the construction or alteration of site of the proposed bridge over Nelson Creek, on the Greymouth and Reefton Road, in the Grey Valley, that have passed between the Government and the following gentlemen and public bodies—namely, the representatives for the Grey Valley, the Chairman or County Council of Grey, and the Mayor of the Borough of Greymouth?

Mr. MACANDREW said the Government had no objection whatever to lay this correspondence on the table. It was rather voluminous, and its production would involve a good deal of trouble. If it would answer the same purpose, he would be glad if any honorable gentleman who took an interest in the subject would step down to the office and peruse the papers. If not, of course the return would be prepared.

EAST COAST MAIL SERVICE.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Postmaster-General, If any steps have been taken to insure the more punctual delivery of the San Francisco mails on the East Coast of the North Island? Last session he asked if the Government would endeavour to take some steps to have the East

Coast mails delivered a little more promptly. He found that the last English mail which arrived in Auckland had been to New Plymouth, Nelson, and Picton, had stayed three days in Wellington, and had just been started in a small steamer—to find its way to Napier, possibly, in due course of time. The Gi-borne mail would have to be sent up by some subsequent steamer, after having performed nearly the whole circuit of the North Island. He hoped to receive a satisfactory answer.

Mr. J. T. FISHER said the department had been in communication with the Union Company, who were not prepared to run a steamer along the East Coast on the arrival of the San Francisco mail. Every step had been taken to expedite the delivery of the Napier mail. Unfortunately, the Featherston Railway having been obstructed in consequence of the recent floods, it was not possible to forward the last mail overland from Wellington.

Captain RUSSELL.—Do I understand the honorable gentleman to say that under no conditions will the Union Company undertake to deliver the mails?

Mr. J. T. FISHER.—At present they are not prepared to run a steamer along the East Coast. They might be willing to run one from Wellington on the arrival of the mail at this port, but it would be at a cost of something like £2,000, which I think the department cannot afford to give.

PUBLIC RESERVES SALES.

Mr. WAKEFIELD asked the Minister of Lands, Whether he will lay before the House a paper showing the number of allotments offered for sale for cash or deferred payments under "The Public Reserves Sale Act, 1878;" the area of such allotments, and the price obtained; and indicating which purchasers on deferred payments have since abandoned their purchases? The answer which the honorable gentleman had given to a previous question had rather confused him as to this question; but the honorable gentleman would see that the two things were totally distinct. This question had nothing to do with deferred payments under the Land Act of 1877.

Mr. THOMSON said he hoped to be able in a few days to lay on the table a paper containing all the information asked for by the honorable member.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. ANDREWS.—Sir, I move, That a respectful Address be presented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech which His Excellency has been pleased to make to both Houses. I fear that I may not be able to do justice either to the subject in hand or to the occasion; but I feel confident that, as a new member, anything I say will be looked upon leniently by the older and more experienced members. I do not intend to detain the House by delivering a lengthened address, but His Excellency's Speech embraces so many subjects that I shall necessarily have to dwell shortly upon them. I will take them in the order in which they appear on the paper, and

will deal with them as carefully as I can. With regard to the first clause, expressing an earnest hope that the new Parliament may be distinguished for the enactment of such measures as shall be most conducive towards promoting the happiness and welfare of the people, I am quite sure that this House will be at one with me in its acquiescence in such a hope. I firmly believe that this House will agree with His Excellency that the present is one of the most important epochs in the history of the colony, and that the future will very much depend upon the impress which may be stamped upon it by the action of this Parliament. Referring to the next clause, dealing with the monetary pressure, every one must be convinced that a considerable amount of monetary pressure has occurred in the whole of the colonies, and not in New Zealand particularly. But I am pleased to receive and acknowledge the assurance of His Excellency that this colony of ours is commercially sound. That assurance cannot fail to be satisfactory to members; and no doubt details will subsequently be given in support of the statement made by His Excellency. Without attempting now to dwell upon that, I will simply pass on to the questions which, I take it, are at the present time of more vital importance. I will refer somewhat carefully to the question relative to the dissolution of the late House. I hope this House will show that the appeal to the electors of the colony has been conducive to the opening-up of very many important questions, which largely affect the destiny and prosperity of this colony. I would refer more particularly to one or two of those questions, and especially would I speak of that which relates to the extension of the franchise. There is also the question of the registration of votes, and, closely allied to it, the hours of polling. If the House will bear with me, I would like to say a word relative to the extension of the franchise, because I feel somewhat keenly on that subject. It is a question that from time to time has been dealt with and spoken of to some considerable extent. In my own district the question has from time to time excited a considerable amount of discussion; and a considerable amount of feeling has been manifested on the subject by several constituencies in and around Christchurch. I cannot say that many people ever expressed any great cause of complaint relative to the extension of the franchise, when we consider that every freeholder, every leaseholder, every householder, and now every lodger has the right to exercise the franchise in this colony. From His Excellency's Speech, I anticipate that there will be an attempt made on the part of the Government to somewhat extend the present franchise. I know that the franchise has been liberal in the past, but I think the House may go still further and make it somewhat more extensive than at present. I once advocated that every person amenable to the laws of the land should have a voice in assisting to make those laws. I have, however, somewhat modified my views in this respect, and I have come to the conclusion that nothing but manhood suffrage with a residential clause will now satisfy

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the people of New Zealand. That is the measure which I think the House will now be asked to pass; so that we shall have manhood suffrage with a residential clause, in addition to the other qualifications already in the Statute Book. I am not at all attempting to champion this particular measure, but I speak of it as one who know something of the feelings of the people. I believe that the people will never ask for more than is proposed to be given to them in the Electoral Bill lately brought forward in this House, and which will be brought forward again. I believe there will be no attempt and no desire on the part of any people to force their views upon the House, so as to cause the insertion of clauses in the Bill which would give to any but real residents and real colonists the power of taking part in the legislation of the land. It is quite a mistaken notion—if any one runs away with it—to suppose that the people of New Zealand are not sufficiently patriotic, and have not sufficient sense and liberty at their command, to see that no such attempt is made. There is no such attempt on the part of the people; and, if there was any such attempt, I would be prepared to oppose anything which would have the effect of permitting loafers, paupers, or prisoners to take part in the legislation of the country. I think that the Bill which will be introduced to Parliament will be an exceedingly satisfactory one to the people; because it not only provides for an extension of the franchise in the way I have mentioned, but it also, I may say, provides for a further extension of the franchise by simplifying the mode of registration. In this matter I think the opinions of the people of Canterbury are only an index to the feelings of the people of New Zealand; and they have frequently asked for, and expect the House at an early date to take, some measures towards simplifying the mode of registration. It is now, and has been for many years, one of the most extraordinary things to understand how it is that everything that requires to be registered throughout the colony can be readily and immediately done, except in the case of a man registering his claim to vote. When a man requires to register a birth, marriage, or death—or, taking almost a ridiculous case, when a man requires to register a dog—the form is so simple that he has only to go to the proper officer to make his statement, and the thing can be done immediately. But it is not so when a man wishes to register his claim to vote. With our present franchise, and under the present mode of receiving claims to vote only within a certain period of the year, a man might land here to-morrow with thousands of pounds, he might expend his money in the purchase of lands, but still he might be twelve months off from being entitled to record his vote if an election takes place, as the registration must be made before the last day of March in each year. But that is not the only case in which a difficulty arises. There is a certain form to be complied with; and in many instances, if I am informed correctly, that form has not been carried out, the consequence being that many persons have been disfranchised through a clerical mistake or error, or through an

attesting witness not being an elector in the district. Closely connected with the registration of votes is the question of the hours of polling. If I express my own views on this subject I shall be expressing the views of the majority of the people of New Zealand. If there is anything that has struck me from time to time as being most ridiculously absurd, it is the present system of fixed hours for polling—from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon. In all cases where a poll has to be taken, the object of such a poll is that every person entitled to record his vote on that occasion shall have an opportunity of doing so. But when a poll is only taken from nine in the morning until four in the evening it prevents many people from voting who are entitled to vote. If I take the case of the City of Christchurch, for instance—it is only similar to many other cases during the last general election—on the Christchurch roll there are 4,200 electors, and, allowing for 700 who are ineligible through death, double claims, &c., there are 3,500 persons on that roll who are clearly entitled to vote. The result of last election shows that only 2,500 persons voted. What became of the rest? Where were they? That is easily accounted for. The hours of polling are the difficulty, because persons are debarred from voting in hours of their own. I believe there are hundreds of working-men in the country who are too independent to ask their employers for a quarter or half an hour, or for sufficient time to go and record their votes. But, if the position which I take up is the correct one—that the object of taking a poll should be to obtain a true and fair declaration of the will of the people—the hours of polling should be extended. That I believe will be done when the new Electoral Bill is taken in hand. If the hours of polling are extended to from eight o'clock in the morning until six, seven, or eight o'clock at night, I do not think we shall have reason to complain that so few people avail themselves of the franchise when an election takes place. I am quite sure of this: that, if we even alter the hours of polling alone, it will in itself make a completely new franchise for many persons who are working-men. It would be out of place on my part at a time like this to make any further comment on this matter. I am not prepared to attempt to define the terms "Liberalism" and "Conservatism," but I cannot help taking this opportunity of saying that the reason why the term Liberalism has been so very freely used as in opposition to Conservatism is this: that the law of the land permits all persons holding certain qualifications to take part in elections; but, on account of the surroundings, and many matters of detail which are almost impracticable, many persons are induced to declaim against the action of men and against many laws, and call them Conservative. This arises from the want of simple, plain, and practicable means of carrying those laws into effect. The most surprising thing is this, that these matters are not new. They have been from time to time before this House, and before many members now present, who have sat in previous Parliaments; but up

to the present time no attempt has ever been made to alter or simplify this particular question—especially as to the simplicity of registration of votes, and the hours of polling. I would now refer to the next clause in His Excellency's Speech, which relates to the question of triennial Parliaments. I think that the rapidly-changing state of the colony and the changing opinions of the people demand this alteration in the law. It is not, perhaps, a subject upon which any new member of the House ought to express himself strongly. During three sessions a new member can hardly become intimately acquainted with the usages of the House unless he has had a training in some other legislative body. If this proposed measure should be adopted, by the time a new member becomes acquainted with the usages of the House his term is at an end, and he has again to seek re-election. But, if we take the dissolution of the late House and the election of this House as a case in point, it is one worthy of our consideration, because I think the last House sat for about a period of three years, and out of that House of eighty-eight members only three-fifths were considered by the electors to be of sufficiently-advanced opinions or sufficiently sound to possess the confidence of those whom they had previously served. We have two-fifths of this new House composed of new members. I think that this is a thorough and decided expression of opinion on the part of the people throughout New Zealand, that a change in this direction is required. I believe the people of New Zealand have asserted that we shall have triennial Parliaments, and that we shall have a change in the constitution of this House every three years. I am prepared to vote for such a measure as this, because I believe that the people of New Zealand require it. It is not, Sir, for me to attempt to express an opinion as to the superiority of this newly-constituted House over the old one; but it will be for honorable members to take up such questions as these, and it will be by the measures that are actually passed that the people will judge whether this new House is an improvement on that of the past. There is another question which I intend shortly to deal with, and that is the redistribution of seats. Great complaints have been made from time to time, in very many places, respecting this question, by people who consider that the system of representation should be fixed on a population basis. I was pleased to notice that a return has been called for showing the population and the number of electors on the electoral roll of each electoral district, and the number of electors who polled in each district on the occasion of the last general election, by one of the members of this House. I have taken the trouble to look at the Redistribution of Seats Bill, in so far as it relates to our present Constitution; and if the House will permit me I will read that portion of the Constitution Act which I think perfectly harmonizes with the view of the Government in proposing such a Bill, and of which His Excellency entirely approves. Clause 41 of the Constitution Act reads thus:—

"In determining the number and extent of

such electoral districts, and the number of members to be elected for each district, regard shall be had to the number of electors within the same, so that the number of members to be assigned to any one district may bear to the whole number of the members of the House of Representatives as nearly as may be the same proportion as the number of electors within such district shall bear to the whole number of electors in New Zealand."

Now, it appears to me that the very knowledge of the existence of such a provision as that in the Constitution Act has been entirely, or seems to have been entirely, lost sight of by our legislators in the past. If I have made a mistake, I hope some member of the House will correct me; but that is the way I read the Constitution, and that a system of representation which is not based on population is not in harmony with that Constitution. I feel confident that the three measures alluded to in His Excellency's Speech—the extension of the franchise, the redistribution of seats, and triennial Parliaments—will be passed by this new House, and passed this session. After these measures have been passed, other matters of very great importance will come before this House. I allude, for instance, to a change in the system of taxation. It is my own impression, and that of my constituents, that the present is not a satisfactory or an equitable system of taxation. Again, we want a fair and just administration of the lands. We want to go further than this, and have something done which will better satisfy the people respecting the matter of local self-government. The people in the various provincial districts throughout New Zealand appear to be divided in opinion upon this matter; we are not in harmony with each other, and the question must be taken up by this House. Above all things do I desire, and I believe this House desires, that in all these matters there shall exist this great consideration—that of economy of administration. I will now say a few words relative to another matter which has been referred to somewhat prominently in His Excellency's Speech—namely, the plurality of voting for local bodies. I think some change is necessary. When we take into consideration the fact that something like £550,000 is being paid away annually to local bodies, I think that some change must take place relative to plural voting. It seems to me that, when such a large amount of the taxpayers' money is annually paid from the Consolidated Fund, something should be done in regard to this plural mode of voting. For instance, I will take the case of a man having five votes in my own constituency. He may possess property of sufficient extent to entitle him to five votes in each ward. There are four wards in the City of Christchurch, and this man would be entitled to possess twenty votes. He may have five votes for four different places outside these wards; so that in an election under the present system he may be entitled to record forty votes. The system may work in this way. I know of one case in particular where during the last election a person has taken advantage of this system of plural voting, and has recorded in the city and outside the city some forty votes, and yet he is

simply a lodger, lodging in a public-house and enjoying himself in that way. He has no further status of any kind; he is nothing else but simply a lodger, and nevertheless, by the system of plural voting, he is entitled to record something like forty votes. On the other hand I can point to the case of an individual with a wife and ten children, making in all twelve persons, taxpayers of the country; and he has simply the power of recording a single vote. Surely there is something wrong here, and something that requires looking into. I feel pleased that His Excellency has drawn attention to this subject in his Speech. Sir, the question of small-farm settlements is one of great interest to the people of New Zealand, and especially to the working-classes. Without going into particulars, I may state that experiments have been tried from time to time. As to the satisfactory dealing with this question, much will depend on the character of the Bill brought before this House, and whether it will be an acceptable measure or not. In whatever shape the Bill may come before this House, if it sets itself to accomplish the end which is sought for in this particular direction, I am sure such action will be highly satisfactory to the people of New Zealand. What we want to look at—what this House requires to aim at—in dealing with this particular question is the creating of small-farm settlements, so as to provide homes for the people. It is homes for the people that we require; and in connection with these homes we want constant employment for the labouring classes. If these objects be accomplished, we shall then have colonists of the right stamp settled throughout the country—men who will grow up and identify themselves with the places in which they are located. Any person who has taken the trouble to look around in many towns in New Zealand will admit with me that the houses of the working-people are not what we should call homes. For instance, in the City of Wellington, if we look at the houses—it is hardly fair to call them homes—if we pass by the majority of the houses where the working-classes dwell in and around Wellington, we see that they are destitute of any flowers, shrubs, plants, or fruit-trees. The places where many of the working-classes dwell, and learn to dwell, are as a rule the kind of places fit only for lodgers. I think this House should earnestly take this matter into its careful consideration. By so doing it will confer a great benefit on the people of New Zealand, and on people living in the towns particularly. We should offer inducements to them to go into the country and settle there. If inducements were held out of the kind referred to, I am sure they would tempt many persons who are now hanging about the towns—if I may use such an expression. They would tend to remove many of those people who are now compelled to remain in the towns out of employment, and cause many of them to go to the country and make homes for themselves and homes for their families. I should like to refer shortly to the question of immigration, although it is not specially referred to in His Excellency's Speech. I take it that immigration is a question which must be very carefully considered in connection with the settle-

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ment of the land. Not that I think the introduction of a large body of immigrants would be desirable or beneficial to the interests of the country at the present time. We must remember, however, that we have to foster and encourage our local industries, and if we wish to see this colony of ours prosper and succeed we must do nothing that will in any way interfere with the permanent building-up of our local industries and manufactures. In every department of our manufacturing industries there is a great call for experienced and skilled workmen, and the want in this respect can only be supplied by immigration, and especially by the introduction of nominated immigrants. If we keep up that class of immigration we shall for many years have coming to our shores skilled and competent workmen—men capable of carrying on those manufactures which at the present time are but partially carried on. Our manufactures will thereby increase and become perfect, and works already commenced will be carried to a successful issue. If such be the case, I am sure this House will agree that it would be very injurious for the Government to interfere in any way with the introduction of nominated immigrants especially. I am not one of those who are led away by any sudden outcry. I believe, if we have a good harvest here, the time may come when there will be a great outcry for labour; but that is not a matter which would tempt me to move largely in the way of immigration. What I contend is, that if we are to have a settled and prosperous country here it must grow gradually. If men will bring out their friends it will not only be advantageous to themselves, but we shall obtain colonists of the right stamp, whose services to the country will be known before they are brought out. His Excellency refers to the estimates of expenditure. The House can scarcely be called upon to express an opinion with regard to them at the present time. As a matter of necessity they must be placed in detail before us before we can form an opinion as to their allocation in connection with the requirements of the colony. Of this, however, I am sure: The House is satisfied that, no matter what may be the position of our affairs, public works must be carried on, our trunk railways must be completed, the best routes should be carefully examined into, and Select Committees should be appointed to investigate these matters. Whatever else may happen, our public works must receive the fullest attention. It is only by taking advantage of our railways to move about from place to place that we can see the altered position of affairs since the old coach-roads were the only means of communication. Leaving that subject, I will next briefly refer to the question of Maori lands, which is also referred to in His Excellency's Speech. I think these lands and the unfulfilled promises made in regard to them should be dealt with carefully by the House. I believe that, above all things, anything connected with the Maori question should be dealt with in a constitutional manner. I have been grieved to hear from time to time of things being done as matters of expediency. I am convinced that expediency should be entirely removed from our

dealings with the Maori question, and they should be carried on only in a constitutional manner. This question is not one of such vital importance in the South as it is here in Wellington, or farther north. There are in that part of the colony persons known as Maori land agents. That name of Maori land agent is a horrible name down south. A person who bears that title is looked upon there as almost a traitor—a disseminator of all discord and discontent. I am sure the House will take this matter into its serious consideration, and will be better able to deal with it than I can pretend to be. When dealing with the question of immigration I ought, perhaps, to have referred to Chinese immigration, as notice has been given that a Bill will be introduced to deal with it. I would not prevent a Chinaman landing here, but I say the House should take such steps as will prevent an influx of a class of persons who are not likely to prove a desirable acquisition to us in morals, habits, and dispositions. Having gone thus briefly through the various measures contained in the Governor's Speech, I would ask the House to assure His Excellency that all matters submitted to it during this session shall receive the careful and earnest consideration of the House. I have no doubt the House will carefully consider all these matters, and the result will show whether this House is an improvement on the last, or whether it is going to follow in the old track. In conclusion, I would ask the House to assure His Excellency that the great liberal policy shadowed forth in his Speech will receive our cordial support. I take it, it is a great liberal policy. It comes before us as the only policy that can respond to the wishes and sentiments of the people throughout New Zealand. It is such a policy as the people will have carried out, and the achievement of which will form one of the grandest epochs in the history of New Zealand. It affords me great pleasure to think that every part of this House—every district throughout New Zealand—has expressed itself entirely in favour of this policy. It now only remains for the House to carry these measures into practical effect, and above all things I hope we shall be able to do so as early as possible. If there is one point more than another in which I feel I have the confidence of my constituents, it is this: that they believe I am a man who will do my utmost to have these measures brought into practical effect. I therefore would earnestly press upon the House to set itself to work as speedily as possible and make the measures shadowed forth in His Excellency's Speech the practical laws of New Zealand. When that is done, we may confidently look forward to a future of prosperity. It is not necessary for me to say anything more on an occasion of this kind. I think I know sufficient of the feeling of the House to feel that, if I were to prolong the expression of my opinions, I should be only wearying honorable members. Still I feel myself somewhat hampered, because it is a new occasion for me, and I am, as it were, bound between two straight poles. Not being personally acquainted with many members of the House, I am hampered somewhat in expressing myself as freely as I

might do, while I do not wish to go beyond the ordinary rules of the House. If, however, I had trespassed on the House, or departed from its usual forms and customs, I am sure that you, Sir, would have expressed your opinion in the kindest manner to me, and would have checked me. In conclusion, I may say that I am willing to help the House, in every reasonable and constitutional way, to carry out the measures shadowed forth in His Excellency's Speech; and I trust the House will assure His Excellency that it is willing to support him in passing those measures into law.

Mr. W. J. HURST.—Mr. Speaker, I will commence by asking for that consideration which I believe it is customary at all times to extend to members who address this House for the first time. I may say, at the outset, if you will pardon my doing so, that it affords me infinite pleasure to see you, Sir, occupying a position in this House which I have on previous occasions seen you occupy in another Assembly of a somewhat similar description. That fact inspires me with a greater degree of confidence, and it was a source of great gratification to me to see the unanimity with which this House elected you to a position which you are so fitted to adorn. After the long and able speech of the honorable gentleman who has just sat down, it would be highly inexpedient for me to travel over the same ground which he has so well travelled over. I may, however, refer to one or two points in the Speech of His Excellency, and particularly to that paragraph at the outset in which he says,—

"We have reached what is perhaps, as yet, the most important epoch in the history of this colony; and the future will very much depend upon the impress which may be stamped upon it by the action of this Parliament."

Who dares deny that very important announcement? There are three matters which I think particularly demand the serious consideration of honorable members. First, there are these important liberal measures which have been before the country—and it is idle for some honorable members to deny that during the late elections they have been before the country. Secondly, there is the important question of our financial affairs. And, thirdly, there is the not less important question of our Native affairs. All these things, I say, demand at the present time the utmost patriotism at the hands of every honorable member of this House. When the Prime Minister did me the honor to ask me to occupy the position which I unworthily do on the present occasion, I told him I held very strong views on the financial question. What do you think, Sir, was the reply of that honorable gentleman, who has been termed the "common enemy"? He said, "Hurst, we want nothing but what is right; express your views freely." I am persuaded that the honorable gentleman does desire nothing but what is right, and in the interests of posterity in this colony. I have said there are three matters: There are, first of all, these important liberal measures which have been before the country. Let me refer somewhat to them. It is idle to say that they have not

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been before the country. I maintain that they have been before the country; and I consider that the country has pronounced in no equivocal terms in favour of the carrying of some such measures as those about to be proposed by the Government. I have always understood that an Opposition is as much a part of the Government as a Government itself, and I should have been very greatly pleased if the present Opposition in this Assembly, instead of at once attacking the honorable gentlemen on those benches, had seen their way, with the large and powerful party of which they are composed, to assist the Government in carrying the great liberal measures which they propose, and thus aid in securing that which the Government say would ensue from the adoption of their proposals, namely—that, when they had once become law, a general feeling of contentment would be permanently established in the colony. Is not this a desirable end to achieve? Instead of struggling for office, which, unfortunately, is a practice that is beginning to be a blot on this colony as it is on others, I should have been glad indeed if the Opposition had been content to aid the Government in carrying these desirable measures, and in enabling the country to enjoy the rest and peace which would ensue from their adoption. The amendment to the Address which has been tabled by the Opposition does them credit for the manner in which it is drafted; but I should be glad if I had power to persuade some honorable members who in all probability propose to join the Opposition to look at that amendment in its proper light. It says, "Whilst, however, we are prepared to give effect to the liberal measures desired by the country." Who are to be the interpreters of the feeling of the country? Those honorable members who now form the Opposition, who for a long time held the reins of government in this country, who have never shown the slightest disposition in the direction of liberal measures? All of a sudden we find that the whole colony is liberal from one end to the other. What do these honorable gentlemen intend to do? They intend to follow the example set by the Conservative Government in England when Lord John Russell in 1868 went to the country, and afterwards met the House of Parliament in a minority. What did the Conservatives do then? They passed the liberal measures of the previous Government simply because the country demanded them. I say that, if the Opposition consult their own interests and those of the country, they ought, instead of attempting to wrest their offices from the Government, to join in the endeavour to bring these liberal measures to a successful issue. If you want to ascertain the feeling of the country, take the published addresses of honorable members to their constituents. I say, taking those addresses, that the country has indorsed the policy of the Government, and has sent members here who represent the bulk of the inhabitants of the colony. I will take the return of the honorable gentleman who has moved this Address and of myself, who am seconding it, and will quote the number of electors who polled for us. The honorable mem-

ber for Christchurch City polled 1,250 votes; in Auckland City West I polled 1,010; making a total of 2,260. Now I will show the House what eleven members of the Opposition represent: Nelson Suburbs, 112; Cheviot, 137; Collingwood, 145; Wallace, 166; Hutt, 177; Waikato, 215; New Plymouth, 227; Wellington Country District, 241; Geraldine, 247; Rangitikei, 284; Bruce, 245. There are eleven members representing only 2,186 voters. This is not the first time in this House that honorable members have been told that they represent sheep and barren hills; and I say that the country will not stand it. If the Opposition do not at once accept the position and go in for a reasonable and fair basis of representation, the result will be unfortunate to themselves and detrimental to the interests of the people. I mean to say that for eleven members to represent fewer votes than the number represented by two members is altogether out of proportion. I observed in the *Hansard* of 1875, Vol. XIX., that the honorable member for Newton endeavoured to snatch a member for his constituency, which at that time was one of the largest in New Zealand. While Hawke's Bay could get a member, that large and intelligent constituency of Newton was refused adequate representation. This question is of burning importance, and ought to be dealt with at once. I will now pass on in my remarks to the financial condition of the colony, which, I will at once say, is very grave and serious. I cannot speak now in reference to any position the present Government hold, but I take leave to say that the responsibility for the present financial state of the colony rests upon the honorable members of the Opposition, and particularly upon the honorable and gallant member for Egmont. When that honorable member entered this House, did he do so as a supporter of Sir Julius Vogel? No; he entered the House as an opponent of that honorable gentleman and his party. What did we see shortly afterwards? That "continuous" Ministry, which landed this colony in a debt the difficulty of which we are only now beginning to find out. Therefore I hope honorable members will not connect my observations on the financial condition of the colony with the present Government. They have a deeper significance than that. We have sown to the wind, and we are now beginning to reap the whirlwind. I was in favour, to a modified extent, of the policy that was enunciated in 1870; but I consider that this House has been most reckless and precipitate in the manner in which it has dealt with that question. I contend that this House and the country have been demoralized in connection with the public works policy, and that it demands serious consideration at the hands of every honorable member holding a seat in this House whether we are eternally to go to the very brink of what I call almost bankruptcy, before getting further money to carry on the public works of the colony. I do not want to say anything to damage the credit of the colony, but am aware that no words of mine would have any effect of that kind. I am merely indicating considerations which have influenced me in coming to this House, and ask what position

would the colony be in if intelligence were to come from England that a monetary crisis had occurred, in consequence of which we could not raise the five-million loan? It is a serious consideration, and on the heads of the Opposition rests the responsibility. — (No.) — I say that in 1877 the present Government came down with the proposal to borrow the modest sum of four millions. And how did the Opposition meet that proposal? The loan was reduced to a million and a half. These are either facts, or they are not; and I cast upon the Opposition the responsibility of placing the colony in its present disadvantageous position. I have no doubt as to the future of New Zealand. I believe that, if wisely invested, double the amount that has been raised could be safely borrowed. I agree with Governor Du Cane, who visited this colony, and with Sir James Fergusson, both very impartial men, who are of opinion that it entirely depends on the money being judiciously and wisely expended. But none know better than the members of the Opposition how much of the borrowed money has been expended in a way which will never return interest or sinking fund, or anything of the kind. The only good investment has been the money expended on railways, which, I am thankful to say, is beginning to yield a return that will meet, to some extent, the interest and sinking fund in connection with it; yet it is very far short indeed of the amount required: I think the total return only comes to about 2½ per cent. There is one question which the honorable member for Christchurch City failed to notice, but which, in the North Island, at any rate, is attracting an immense deal of attention, and it is one in the settlement of which, I think, the Opposition would do well to assist. I refer to the question of dealing with the Native lands in the North Island. Now, I do not suppose that honorable members from the Middle Island have the same knowledge of this question as those honorable members living in the North Island, because the latter are constantly having it brought under their notice. The policy of the Government in reference to this question, as indicated by the Native Minister in a speech which he recently delivered in Auckland, was such as to give universal satisfaction. It is quite clear to my mind, and to that of every colonist who has carefully marked the progress of events, that the cause of our difficulty has invariably been the fact of the Government having had to do with these Native lands. It was proposed, in order to create a Land Fund for the northern provinces, at a time when they were in deep water, that a sum of money should be voted by the Assembly in order to buy a landed estate for the North Island; and a large amount was voted. Of course on the death of the provinces this became a colonial matter, and successive Governments have gone on desiring to barter with the Natives. I think that proposed remedy is the wisest and the best—that the Natives should look up to the Government, whoever they might be; and I do not wish to express any unkind remarks relative to the members of the Opposition. I mean that it would be a capital thing if we could induce the Natives to look up to the Government

for the time being with thorough confidence. It would end this cry about "land-sharkism," and all that sort of thing; and let land be put up to public auction, so that rich and poor alike may get the land they require. At present the public have a grievance, and I am quite sure that honorable members on both sides of the House must regret the difficulty which exists—namely, that the person who is buying a large tract of land can afford to fee land-purchase agents with large sums of money. While they can do that, the small man who wants a couple of thousand acres has no chance of competing against them. That is really the difficulty, and I am sure honorable members will view it reasonably and fairly. Whether they like it or not, the time will come when the public will compel them to view the present system in the light of an evil; and it is far better for honorable members to accept the position and meet it in some such way as that indicated by the Native Minister. Before concluding, there is one question which I know a little about, and to which I should like briefly to refer. I allude to the Native disturbances. I will now refer to the two disturbances which have taken place since the House last met, as I happen to know something of the circumstances connected with them, and may be pardoned for referring to them. I will refer, first, to the Bay of Islands case, where, unfortunately, loss of blood was occasioned. That was a mere family dispute, with which the Government had nothing whatever to do. No act of omission or commission can be charged against them; nor can they in the most remote degree be blamed for what happened there, although the Opposition Press, throughout the length and breadth of the Island, conveyed the impression that the Government were to blame. The dispute was strictly an intertribal dispute, and it is not right to put upon the Government the responsibility of any occurrences of that description, any more than it would be right to blame them for the Thames matter. The more honorable members understand about these matters the better they will be able to estimate the amount of responsibility which should attach to the Government. The surveyors were sent, in the ordinary course of business, to survey this land, and, without the slightest notice, a small section of the tribe came down upon them. They were angry and annoyed, not at the surveyors, but at the people who had sold the land away from them. Before they fired they called out, "Pakeha, go away; we don't want to shoot you." That was the sound that met the ears of the surveyors, and they fired at a person who, in appearance, is darker than an ordinary half-caste. I can assure the House that the chiefs in no way identified themselves with this movement, nor does it in the slightest degree possess political significance. No doubt some honorable members, such as the honorable member for Egmont and the honorable member for New Plymouth, would urge the Government to take active measures to arrest these men; but there are difficulties in the way of which honorable members are probably not aware. For instance, I had a conversation with one of the commanding officers who would probably

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have been sent up to cope with the difficulty, and he said, "If Mr. Sheehan had given us permission, we would have gone up." I said, "I suppose, if you had gone up, you would have secured these two people;" and he answered, "No; we should have shot every one of them." But under present circumstances the Government could not interfere. It is impossible to tell what troubles may not arise out of a small circumstance like that; and I think the Government were prudent in coming down to this House before taking any decisive action in the matter. I have been reading some of the speeches delivered last session upon the position of Native affairs, and I quite agree with the honorable member for Geraldine, who well expressed the principle so generally admitted in the House when Sir Donald McLean held the position of Native Minister—namely, that Native affairs should never form the subject of party discussion. The question is too serious to be treated in that manner. It is a continuous question, which should be treated by successive Governments in the manner its importance demands, without being made a party question. I regret to see that there is a disposition to interfere with that excellent principle, because, let me ask, what would be the effect of a Native war? It simply means ruin and destruction of all our hopes for some time to come. We are not prepared for such a war as the Natives can wage against us. And then the Native Minister is held up as heretical because he paid a high tribute to the chief Rewi. Why, Sir, I think that was a very creditable act. What did Sir Donald McLean do? If my memory serves me right, he waited six weeks at Alexandra to see this chief, and then only had the pleasure of shaking hands with Rewi, who did it in a very sour way. But what did Rewi do when the recent outrage at the Thames took place? He mounted his horse and went to the Thames in order to assist in arresting the people who had committed a breach of the peace. That is an important fact in connection with Native affairs at the present time, and Rewi further gave instructions that if these people attempted to pass the frontier they were to be arrested and handed over to justice. Now, all these steps having been taken, I fail to see how the Government can be held responsible. I think they have done an enormous amount of good in the interests of the North Island; and, whatever his faults may be, I hold that no member of this House has done more than the Hon. the Native Minister towards securing that much-desired object of completing the railway to connect the north part of the Island with Taranaki. Once get that railway carried through, and we shall not only advance the commercial interests of the colony, but its civilizing influences will for ever set at rest all possibility of a Native war. I appeal to honorable members to assist in arriving at this great object. The Native Minister cannot, at the present moment, openly state everything that has been done. The moment he did that, many influences would be brought to bear against him, because there are jealousies amongst the Maoris as well as amongst the Europeans. Rewi is

endeavouring to get the railway made, but there are many other subtle Maoris who would throw impediments in the way if they were made aware of all that is being done. I find that I have exceeded the time I had allotted myself, and I will now conclude by thanking honorable members for the kindness and consideration they have shown me. As a new member, I feel a degree of diffidence in placing my views before the House, surrounded as I am by honorable members of much greater age and experience than myself, whose names form part and parcel of the history of the colony; but, although they may surpass me in ability—as they do in eloquence to enforce their arguments—I yield to none in the patriotic desire to faithfully discharge those duties which the constituency I represent has placed in my hands, to advance the best interests of the colony, and promote the happiness and prosperity of its people.

Mr. HALL.—Mr. Speaker, although myself in one sense a young member of this House, I cannot forbear addressing a few words of congratulation to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply on this occasion. The mover is a gentleman with whom it had been my privilege to sit in the Provincial Council of Canterbury for many years. I am sure he will not object to my saying that he is essentially a working-man. He is a man of whom his class may indeed be proud. He has worthily represented their interests elsewhere, and I am sure will do so here. During the time I have sat with him in the Provincial Council he has always shown the same fair, calm, and temperate spirit which he evinced throughout his speech this afternoon. As for the honorable gentleman, the seconder of the Address, I think the old members of this House will agree with me in saying that we have seldom heard a better maiden speech than was delivered by that honorable gentleman. I only hope that the speeches which will be made throughout this debate may breathe the same moderate tone and the same patriotic spirit as were evinced by the honorable member for Auckland City West. While stating this, I am unable to agree with some of his statements, but, speaking generally, I really find very little to differ from in the speech of the honorable member. There are one or two points with regard to which I am not able to agree with him. The honorable gentleman referred to figures to prove that the party with which he is connected really represent the large mass of the people of this country. I think there was a discrepancy between his figures and his arguments. He stated that the honorable members for the City of Christchurch and Auckland City West, the mover and seconder of the Address, represented a certain number of votes—as many in fact as eleven members of the Opposition. Well, that is a very partial view of the case. In the first place, I contend that the number of votes recorded is not always a correct test of the population represented, because, owing to accidental circumstances, some of the electoral rolls may not be complete; and in centres of population, like Auckland and Christchurch, it is much easier for the electors to record their votes

than it is in country districts. The honorable gentleman also lost sight of the fact that the number of votes he mentioned did not represent those who voted for himself alone, but three other members.

Mr. W. J. HURST.—One other member; there is only one other member for Auckland City West.

Mr. HALL.—And two for Christchurch. The large centres do not begin and end with Auckland City West and Christchurch; there are other large centres of population in the colony. For instance, there is the City of Wellington, with a population of 19,000. What does the population of Wellington say? It is represented by two members. One thousand one hundred and eighty-five votes were polled for Mr. Levin, and his honorable colleague obtained only 880 votes. I say that the voice of the population of the City of Wellington was decidedly in favour of the Opposition. Then, with regard to the City of Christchurch. It has a population of 23,000. The number of voters on the roll is 4,202, and of this number only 2,500 polled. Of those who polled, the Premier obtained 1,315 votes; Mr. Stevens, 1,250; and Mr. Andrews, 1,250. It is a remarkable fact that, in that large constituency, there was only a difference of sixty-five votes between the number polled for the Prime Minister himself and for the member who represents entirely different political opinions. In that large centre of population public opinion was therefore pretty fairly divided. Then we come to the City of Dunedin, the population of which is 22,490. How does it stand? With regard to the City of Dunedin, the Minister for Public Works, than whom, I suppose, no man could have stronger personal claims upon any Otago constituency, thought it prudent to retire from the representation of the City of Dunedin.—(No.)—Well, I think events justified my honorable friend's calculations. Every one of the members returned by that populous city belongs to the Opposition. I think my honorable friend the member for Auckland City West evidently did not go far enough in his calculations. To put the matter fairly, in the centres of population in the North there is a preponderance of opinion in favour of the Government; in those in the centre, opinion was pretty evenly divided; and in the South, public opinion was strongly opposed to the Government.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the West Coast?

Mr. HALL.—We do not know rightly yet how the West Coast votes are to go. Then the honorable gentleman stated that the Opposition had adopted a somewhat unpatriotic course in at once bringing forward this vote of want of confidence—that we should rather have gone into the consideration of the Government measures, and endeavoured to mould them into a shape in which we could pass them. If the Opposition had desired to act in such a manner as would give them the greatest party advantage, that is precisely the course they would have adopted. They would have waited until the Government had submitted their programme, and no doubt they would

have found in it a great deal to condemn, a great deal with which many supporters even of the Government would have found fault. The Opposition would have found it exceedingly easy to embarrass the Government to a very considerable extent. If we had sought a party advantage, that is the course we should have adopted. But I say, for myself and those who are acting with me, that that is not the spirit in which we approach the consideration of this question. Sir, what is the position in which we stand? The last House of Representatives, by a very large majority, had declared that the Government had deservedly forfeited the confidence of the country. The Government, by the permission of His Excellency, appealed from this decision to the country at large, and we, the members of this House, are the result of that appeal. I say, altogether irrespective of party considerations, it was our bounden duty, at the earliest practicable and convenient moment, to bring to an issue the question of whether or not the Government does represent the opinions of the people—whether or not the Government does possess the confidence of this House. Sir, I have now to move, as an amendment, the following addition to the Address in Reply: "Whilst, however, we are prepared to give effect to the liberal measures desired by the country, we feel bound to submit to your Excellency that your Excellency's Government, as at present constituted, does not possess the confidence of this House." In speaking to this amendment, I cannot avoid going over ground which, during the last session and also during the elections, has been travelled over before; but I assure the House that I will do so as briefly as possible. And I only do so because I should not be justified in submitting an amendment of this importance without placing on record, as briefly as possible, some of the grounds why I think it should be adopted. The first charge against the Government is this: Whereas they came into office with—I may say, to a certain extent, "got" into office by—large professions of economy, they have failed to give effect to those professions. I remember the terms in which the Prime Minister indulged in regard to the extravagant cost of the Civil Service of this colony. On several occasions he declared in his place in this House that he could, without prejudice to the public service, reduce the annual expenditure by no less a sum than £100,000. He stated that, so satisfied was he of the truth of that statement, he would be prepared, in half an hour, to bring down a scheme which would, without prejudice to the public service, reduce the cost of it by £100,000. That statement will be in the recollection of every honorable member who had then a seat in this House. The honorable gentleman and his colleagues have now been in office for two years; and have they fulfilled the promise which the honorable gentleman then made? During the first year of their tenure of office, it has been shown most distinctly, by figures quoted by my honorable friend on my left (Major Atkinson), that the cost of the Civil Service of this country was not only not reduced,

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but was actually increased by a sum of about £8,000 a year. There might have been some excuse for this the first year. Next year the cost, instead of being diminished, was again increased, and the estimates were £15,000 more than they were when those gentlemen came into office. It is not only, however, by their general failure to perform their promises, but by extravagance within their own personal control, that I say the Government have forfeited the confidence of this House. The Prime Minister stated, at a meeting in this city, that they were prevented from reducing the salaries of Ministers by the refusal of this House to agree to the proposal. It will be recollected that a very great point was made of that proposed reduction. The Prime Minister said the Government, being anxious to reduce the cost of the Civil Service, would commence with themselves. But what was the nature of their proposal to this House? How was it made? We all know that a Government can submit a proposal to Parliament in a variety of ways. They can submit a proposal in such a manner as to show the House that they are determined to carry it through—and the Government could have carried that proposal through if they had chosen to do so. They may, on the other hand, throw a proposal down on the floor of the House, and leave the House to do what it likes with it; and I think I shall be speaking the conviction of all those members who were present when this proposal was submitted if I say the latter was the mode in which this Government dealt with the proposal to reduce their salaries. The proposal was no sooner made than a very steady supporter of the Government, whom I have the pleasure of seeing in the House at the present time, rose and moved an amendment that the proposition should be rejected. That amendment was seconded by another steady supporter of the Government. I do not say that those gentlemen had had any previous communication with the Government on the subject, but the fact remains that the amendment was moved and seconded by supporters of the Government, and was carried against the Government. And what was the result? Did the Government bring that proposal down again? No; we have never even heard of it since. But in what way did the Government deal with these gentlemen who had thus inflicted a grievous defeat upon them, and effaced one of the best features of their policy? Why, Sir, as soon as ever the session was over, those two gentlemen were punished by being made Justices of the Peace. Does that show the great desire of the Government to effect that piece of economy? I next complain of the expense to which Ministers have put the country by the unreasonable use they have made of the Government steamers. I do not mean to say that, occasionally, in cases of emergency or urgency, it is not justifiable and proper for the Government to use such steamers for the conveyance of Ministers. But that is not what has been done. It has been a systematic thing, and almost a matter of course, for the Government to constantly use these steamers to convey them from one part of the colony to another, when they could just as

well have gone by private steamers, at one-tenth the cost. That, I say, is a piece of extravagance utterly unjustifiable. Then, as to the expenditure in relation to Native affairs. What may have been the total amount of that expenditure we do not exactly know; but I hope we shall know it before long. In fact, I feel sure, this House is determined to know it. This, however, we do know: that the Native Minister acknowledges that he has over-expended the votes for his department by £20,000 during the last year. Has there been anything in the circumstances of the country to justify such an enormous expenditure? We know that large sums of money have been consumed upon Native gatherings and Native feasts, and—what shall I say?—miscellaneous expenditure, to an extent which I believe to be without precedent, and certainly without excuse. And what have we got for all this large Native expenditure? What is the result of it? Is the condition of Native affairs better at the present time than it was when those gentlemen came into office two years ago? Is the condition of Native affairs even as good now as it was then?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. HALL.—I admire the sanguine disposition of my honorable friend, who, in the face of what we read day by day in the columns of the newspapers, can say that the condition of Native affairs is even as good now as it was two years ago. Two years ago the Native question was—to use a common expression—to be the great card of the present Government. The great personal influence of the Prime Minister and of the Native Minister was to bring about such a settlement of the Native difficulty as could be obtained in no other way. I do not mean to say that when those gentlemen came into office Native affairs had arrived at that condition in which we should wish to see them; but I do say that, under the wise, careful, and prudent management of the late Sir Donald McLean, they had been improving from day to day and year to year, and, had he been spared to us, I have no doubt they would now be in a most satisfactory condition. But this Government were not content to go on in the careful and prudent manner in which Sir Donald McLean dealt with the Native question. They wished to raise up for themselves a great reputation for having settled off-hand the Native difficulty, and being able to announce that “at last” peace was established throughout the colony. And what is the consequence? So far as I can gather, the Maori King is now in a condition of more distinct and pronounced antagonism to the Government than he was when those gentlemen came into office, and there will be more difficulty in getting him to recede from that position than when those gentlemen obtained the reins of power. A great deal has been made of the concessions which are said to have been obtained from the great chief Rewi; but I want to know what those concessions are, and what advantages have really been obtained. We have heard nothing officially about them, and I cannot but think that, if great success had attended the efforts of those honorable gentlemen, we should have had papers placed on the table giving us official intimation

of the fact. The absence of such papers makes me believe that the Native Minister has really obtained no considerable advantage. Then, with regard to the west coast of this Island: Have the Government been successful there? I will not dwell at length on this subject, because it has already been gone into, but I may say this much: that the very protection of the farms and the homesteads of the settlers has been devolved upon themselves, and, if it had not been for the determination and courage, mixed with self-control to an extent beyond all praise, on the part of those settlers, very serious and disastrous results might have ensued. Then the Government's own servants—their surveyors—were turned off the land which they were surveying on the Waikato Plains, and the Government have not been able to vindicate their authority or restore those surveyors. It has been said that the Government are not to blame for the state of affairs in that district—that the real persons with whom the blame rests are their predecessors. That excuse we might, of course, expect. In fact, as soon as any of us heard of the occurrences we knew that that would be said. We knew some reason would be found to exonerate Ministers. Of course some previously undiscovered promises were found, and they were advanced as the reason for all this trouble. But I will call a witness who will give us some information on the subject—a witness, too, who is favourable to the Government. He is a correspondent sent to that part of the country by a newspaper favourable to the Government—which at any rate receives Government advertisements. He describes an interview he had with Te Whiti, and gives a true account of the whole affair. He also very wisely endeavoured to obtain information from the settlers themselves. This is the account he gives of part of an interview between Te Whiti and Mr. James Mackay:—

“A long discussion then took place, in which Te Whiti asserted that the reason the surveyors had been turned off the Plains was because the Government had promised that the Native cultivations should not be touched, and that reserves should be set apart for their use.

“Mr. Mackay said the Government intended that that should be done.

“Te Whiti replied he did not believe anything of the kind, or the Government would not have ordered the surveyors to cut up their cultivations in the way they had done. Even Titokowaru's garden, he said, the surveyors had been through, and had put pegs in close to the door of his house.

“Mr. Mackay tried to explain that the survey of the Plains did not mean that Government intended to take it and sell it, but it was necessary to mark the land off, so that each person should know what portion of it belonged to him.

“Te Whiti said he could not credit that; they had not consulted him in any way about the land or the survey, and he felt that the Government were going to leave them destitute.”

Then Te Whiti goes on to complain of broken Government promises. That is the account given

by a witness who is by no means unfavourable to the Government, and it is manifest from it that it was the blundering of the Government itself which first led to the surveyors being turned off the land. I will not go further into this Native question. I hope honorable gentlemen from the North Island, who must be better acquainted with it than I can possibly be, will take up the subject; but this I assert—I will not say without fear of contradiction, for of course I shall be contradicted—that there is a state of discontent, and even of lawlessness, amongst the Natives at the present time which did not exist when this Government came into office. In one respect we are certainly indebted to them for what they have done. They have tried the experiment of governing the Natives by means of the personal influence of the Native Minister more than it has ever been tried before, and the colony is utterly tired of the attempt to govern the Natives in that way. The whole colony demands that an end shall be put to the darkness and mystery which hangs over the Native Office—that it shall be put an end to, and that, as far as possible, the Natives shall be governed in the same way as Europeans. The people demand that the system of Native management by the personal influence of a particular Minister shall not be stereotyped, but that the Natives shall be gradually trained to understand and appreciate our institutions, so that they may be made one people with us, living under one Government, and obeying one set of laws. That I believe to be the feeling not only of the Europeans, but of the Natives themselves; and I believe that, if the Government had availed themselves more than they have done of the services of leading Natives, they would have found such a system most beneficial to the country. If they had made these leading chiefs the means of communication with the Natives generally, and so had conveyed to them the intentions of the Government, they would, I believe, have secured great advantages. I will now come to the question of finance. Now, what is the condition of the finances of the colony? That is what everybody wants to know, and the general complaint is, that we have so very little information on the subject. All we do know is, that there is a very large deficiency. I do not blame the Government because of the fact that there is a deficiency, but I do blame them for making an utterly imprudent estimate of the revenue that was likely to accrue, especially from the sale of the waste lands, and for turning a deaf ear to the warnings, which were poured in upon them from every side, that there was not the slightest probability of the land revenue yielding the sum which they had put down. While on the subject of finance, I will refer to the Loan Bill of last session. I have been present at the passing of many—I may say of almost all the Loan Bills which have been passed by this Legislature; and honorable members who have been placed in the same position will bear me out when I say that it has been the invariable practice, when a loan was proposed, that it should be preceded by a review of the financial position

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of the colony—a statement setting forth our expenditure, our income, our resources, our indebtedness, how that indebtedness had been created, how the money was spent, how it was proposed to spend the new loan, and what our ability was to bear the burden of it. And if ever there was a time when it was desirable that such a statement should be made, it was when this House was asked to pass a Loan Bill for a larger amount than had ever been passed before. But what actually took place? I do not mean to say that under the peculiar circumstances of the last session it would have been reasonable to expect so copious a Financial Statement as is usually presented to the House. The Minister for Public Works did not give so full a Statement as he gave the previous year, but he gave a satisfactory summary of the proposals for the ensuing year; and I certainly expected that we should have had placed before us some intelligible statement of our financial position, either when the Loan Bill came down, or afterwards, when the House went into Committee of Supply. But what took place? The Colonial Treasurer held a few papers in his hand. He read part of one, and I think he read a clause of what was intended to be an Appropriation Bill, and then, to my amazement, the honorable gentleman sat down. I thought I must have made some mistake in the matter, and when I received *Hassard* I turned to the place where the Financial Statement is invariably to be found, and there I saw this strange announcement:—

“As the honorable member was apparently reading the Statement, and as Financial Statements had always previously been supplied to *Hassard*, the reporter in the gallery did not take notes. The Statement not having been supplied, and no report having been taken, there is no record of it.”

I am not surprised that honorable members should laugh, but really this is no laughing matter. We are going to the London money market, where the amount of our indebtedness is already attracting very serious attention, to apply for a larger loan than we have ever applied for before. Prudent men, before lending their money, will require to be fully informed of the condition of the colony, and when they know that it has been customary to send Home a printed copy of the Financial Statement, they will naturally look to *Hassard* for it; and this is the only mention they will find of the subject. Now, I ask this House whether such a proceeding as that is not enough to shake the confidence of the House and the country in the capacity of the Government to deal with the question of finance. The next complaint I have to make against the Government is, that they have tampered with one of the most valuable institutions which any free country can possess—and that is, the public Press. I am but repeating a truism when I say that the public Press is the bulwark of our liberties, and that without a free, independent, and honest public Press you can have no security for the honesty of the Government or for a diligent and honest administration of affairs. The Government, it is true, cannot take money from the public chest to

openly subsidize particular newspapers, but they have the right of giving Government advertisements to newspapers; and gentlemen connected with the Press will bear me out in saying that the advertising is the most lucrative part of their business. Now, the Government has, in the most unblushing manner, endeavoured to influence the public Press by means of Government advertisements. In Wellington a Government newspaper was established about eighteen months ago, the principal shareholders in which were members of the Government themselves; and no sooner was that done than the Government advertisements were taken away from the oldest newspaper in the city and given to the newly-established newspaper. I would ask whether that is the way to encourage a free and independent Press. This practice, of course, was not confined to Wellington. In Christchurch exactly the same kind of thing was done. The Government advertisements were let by contract up to a certain date, and after the contract had expired the Opposition paper applied for a share of the Government advertising. It was refused; and to this day the Government advertisements are given to the Government newspaper, and absolutely refused to the newspaper which does not support the Government. That is not only unfair as between one newspaper and another, but it is grossly unfair to the public, for whose benefit these advertisements are inserted. Why, Sir, what is the object of advertising? It is that the matter advertised shall become known to the public at large, and not to one section only. If economy is the object, the Government should give the advertisements to one paper to-day and to the other to-morrow. In that way people of both sides in politics would have a chance of knowing what the Government advertisements contained. The last copy of the *Press* I received contains very nearly two columns of Government advertisements, which are inserted gratuitously in order that its readers may not be deprived of that information which these Government advertisements contain. And what has been done in Wellington and in Christchurch has been done all over the colony. I will only briefly allude to the way in which the Government has influenced the public Press—I will not say bribed, although that term would not be too strong—by means of the advantages which the special-wire arrangement gave to certain newspapers. In Christchurch the proprietors of one newspaper have to pay £1,200 a year for what the Government newspaper gets for £300. Really it seems difficult to believe that a free people should so long have tolerated such a gross and scandalous abuse of power. My next complaint against the Government is their arbitrary treatment of the Civil servants. This subject was referred to by Sir William Fox in introducing the vote of want of confidence last session, and, amongst other instances, he mentioned the case of Mr. Booth, who had been put on trial and dealt with in a very harsh and unjust manner. The Native Minister, in reply to the charge, said that not only had Mr. Booth been reinstated, but that he had been placed in a

higher position, with a higher salary. These are the honorable gentleman's own words: "Mr. Booth is now occupying a higher position, with a higher salary, and I have his own personal assurance that never, since he has been in the service of the Government, has he had such consideration and fair-play as he has received from me." And this statement, in regard to the higher salary, is repeated further on in the honorable gentleman's speech. Now, that was an important statement for a Minister to make to this House; but I am informed on good authority, and in a manner so circumstantial that I cannot doubt it, that the first intimation Mr. Booth had of any increase in his salary was his reading that statement in *Hansard*. I would not repeat that assertion if I did not believe it to be true; if the Government can deny its truth I shall be glad of it; but I think it is a matter that ought not to be lightly passed over. Then, Sir, the Government have dealt harshly with the Civil servants by giving to Mr. Luckie one of the most desirable appointments in the gift of the Government. The Civil servants are not overpaid, as we know; the inducements for them to remain in the service are the permanency of their appointments, and the prospect, as years go on, that they will rise to the top of the tree. Therefore, when a valuable appointment becomes vacant the older members of the Service who are competent to fill it have a fair claim to the promotion, and it is a great injustice—a wrong to the colony—to discourage the Civil servants, and pass them over in order to appoint a gentleman who had no claim to the appointment except that he was a political writer who had supported the Government. I hear several honorable gentlemen say, "Oh, oh!" I shall be glad if those honorable gentlemen will mention what other claims Mr. Luckie possessed. When I hear that he had had anything to do with life insurance before, or was in any way an expert in the business, I shall be ready to withdraw the statement which I now make, that in their action in this respect the Government did a great wrong to the Civil Service. The next complaint I have to make against the Government is the extraordinary neglect which has pervaded the administration of the Department of Justice. I will only cite two cases out of very many which I might mention. Down at Lyttelton a change has taken place in the Resident Magistracy. The former Resident Magistrate was about to retire upon a pension. He gave the Government notice months beforehand of his intention, and the people of Lyttelton looked forward very naturally with great anxiety for the appointment of a successor. Week after week and month after month went by, and no person was appointed, until at last the Resident Magistrate had to go away, and leave the office vacant. Now, Lyttelton is a seaport town. I have filled the position of Resident Magistrate there myself, and know the great necessity for a Magistrate being constantly present, as shipping cases have to be dealt with summarily which cannot well be postponed. Not only did the Government neglect to make the appointment until after the Resident Magistrate had gone, but, even then, week after

week and month after month went by, and, in spite of applications from the Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Harbour Board, and of telegrams and applications to the Government of all kinds, the appointment was left vacant for nearly six months, to the great inconvenience of everybody connected with the place. I hope we shall not be told that the Government could not find a person to fill the office of Resident Magistrate. If there is one kind of appointment for which there are a greater number of candidates than any other, it is that of Resident Magistrate; if a person is not fit for anything else, he often applies for the situation of Resident Magistrate. It so happens, unfortunately, that Lyttelton is perhaps the one place in the colony in which there are not a large number of Justices of the Peace. Generally speaking, they are as thick as leaves in Valambrosa; but my honorable friend the Mayor of Lyttelton, and, I believe, one other gentleman—a medical man—are the only Justices of the Peace resident there. The medical man is, of course, very often absent on his professional duties. There are a great many cases in which a single Justice cannot act by himself; and the consequence was, that cases had to be put off day after day, and I am told that even lunatics had to be confined day after day when they might have been released. In other cases prisoners had to be taken to Christchurch. And all because the Government could not find time to select, from the many candidates whom, no doubt, they had at their disposal, a gentleman to fill the appointment of Resident Magistrate at Lyttelton. Sir, I say that that was gross and culpable neglect. Then I will allude to a case which came under my own personal knowledge—the case of the Addington Gaol, near Christchurch. That gaol, when not overcrowded, has accommodation for twenty-nine prisoners. The average number for the last eighteen months has been forty. Now, in the session of 1878 I personally brought this matter over and over again under the attention of the Minister of Justice. Applications were also made to the honorable gentleman from the gaoler and others, until at last he did say he would have a sum of money placed on the estimates; and he kept his promise to that extent. But in spite of my repeated applications that sum has not been spent to the present day. Standing side by side with this gaol, in which there is such insufficient accommodation, there is a large concrete building capable of affording room for fifty or sixty prisoners, and which only requires to be fitted up to provide most ample accommodation. Yet week after week and month after month have elapsed, and, although the money is on the estimates for the purpose, and though the Government have been repeatedly applied to, we have not been able to get out of them the simple authority which was required to enable the accommodation to be furnished. These are samples of the way in which the Department of Justice has been carried on. My next complaint against the Government is one which has made perhaps a more painful impression on me than any other, and it is as to

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the scandalous manner in which the lunatics of this colony have been treated. If there is one class more than another who, I think, have a strong claim upon our sympathies, it is those poor creatures bereft of their reason, who are quite unable themselves to make their voices heard. The Government have had their attention drawn to the case of the lunatics, not only in my part of the colony, but in other parts, year after year, by the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, who, with a courage worthy of all praise, has in the most forcible language set out the culpable and scandalous inefficiency which exists in this respect. In a report laid on the table only a day or two ago by the Premier, this is the way in which the Inspector speaks of the accommodation at Christchurch:—

"The overcrowding of the male department is such that it is in a very dangerous condition indeed, and its proper management is quite impossible. Every day-room is used as a dormitory, and excited, discontented, and violent patients are strewn about in all directions as thick as they can lie, on the floors, on the tops of tables, and underneath the tables; and the atmosphere is disgusting in spite of open windows. The building is in an advanced state of decay, and the flooring in many rooms is dangerously rotten, bending freely beneath one's tread. In two places I put my foot right through it. It is patched right and left with boards or large plates of zinc, to keep out the rats."

Now, after the present Government have been in office for two years, after the matter has been pressed upon them, not only by their own officer, but by the newspapers, from which I could quote columns and columns on the subject, this is the state in which the Christchurch Asylum is found at the present day. When the Prime Minister was in Christchurch about eighteen months ago he was appealed to by the chaplain of the Asylum—I dare say he will recollect that—to have some remedy applied to this horrible state of things. He requested that gentleman to write to him. The letter was written, but I think no answer was returned. He was then telegraphed to by the honorable member for Avon. That was eighteen months ago. A contract is now in hand, it is true, but up to this day there has been no alleviation of that most cruel state of things. The contract, I say, is now in hand. I am told by the manager of the Asylum that he requires accommodation for one hundred and forty patients, and yet this contract is only for forty. Even now, at the eleventh hour, they are only providing accommodation for forty patients. And, Sir, the Government cannot say that the House would not give them the money, because, when this very vote was under discussion, the honorable member for Avon entreated them to increase the amount proposed; but they turned a deaf ear to his request,—and here are those poor lunatics, who cannot tell their own tale of woe and misery, still kept in this horrible condition entirely through neglect on the part of the Government. I could cite other cases. I believe the Wellington Asylum is in a condition almost as

bad, if not quite. I have now wearied the House, I am afraid, with instances of misgovernment. I will not go further in this direction. I have had too much to do with Governments not to be aware that no Government can be in office for two years without laying itself open to attacks upon its administration. Every Government must make mistakes; and I am also aware that in many cases Ministers are blamed through being officially responsible for the acts of their subordinates. But I submit that of the instances which I have given there is not one in which the neglect is not directly traceable to the Ministers themselves. They are not only officially responsible, but they are personally responsible. I admit that all the Governments we have seen have made mistakes and have given a handle to their opponents; but I also submit that we have never—I certainly have never—known a Government which, in two years, was guilty of such a catalogue of gross blunders and so much culpable neglect as the present Government. Now, what is the secret of this? The secret of it is in the practical abandonment of that system of constitutional government which prevailed in this colony up to the time when the present Government came into office. I wish to speak with every respect of the Prime Minister—of a gentleman of such distinguished antecedents as his are. But the character of those antecedents themselves furnishes just the reason why the honorable gentleman is ill-qualified to occupy the position of Prime Minister of a constitutional colony. What are those antecedents? The honorable gentleman occupied for lengthened periods, and with great distinction, the position of Governor of Crown colonies, where his will was law. He filled those positions during that time of life when a man's character is forming; and it is therefore not at all surprising that the honorable gentleman has become what, I understand, he objects to being called—decidedly autocratic.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, oh.

Mr. HALL.—If honorable gentlemen deny this, they have only to carry back their memories to the manner in which the Prime Minister has dealt with various measures which have come before this House. What did the honorable gentleman do with the Land Bill, which had passed both Houses of Parliament, and which his own colleagues had assented to? What did he do with the Electoral Bill of last year? What did he do—passing from this House to the Cabinet—to one of his own colleagues? What did he do when one of the most able of his colleagues refused to obey him in a matter in which he had no right to expect any obedience? He drove that gentleman out of his Cabinet under circumstances of indignity which not only reflect discredit upon himself, but which, if passed over by us, will reflect discredit on the colony. It has been said that party government is essential to the proper conduct of parliamentary government. That is perfectly true, and, during the many years that I have been a member of this Legislature, there have nearly always been tolerably well-defined parties. The causes of that definition have now, to a

certain extent, passed away. The old question of Centralism *versus* Provincialism is dead, and no *bond fide* dividing principle, as opposed to the pretended distinction which is being constantly dinned into our ears, has since taken its place. But, Sir, a *bond fide* honest difference has now arisen around which, I think, parties are grouping themselves at present, and that is, as to whether we shall have a “personal” Government—that is to say, a Government in which the personal will of the Prime Minister is to be the supreme law—or whether we shall have a Government on the lines of the Constitution, under which gentlemen shall occupy those benches not because they are ready to declare themselves supporters of this or that particular man, but because, by their character, by their services, and by their antecedents, the country believes them to be the most capable, the most efficient, and the most desirable men for the position. That is the question around which I think parties are now grouping themselves—whether we shall have personal government in this colony, or whether we shall have constitutional government. Before I sit down I must refer to what has happened since this House last met, in respect to the manner in which the Government have thought themselves justified in attempting to influence the elections. The people were invited to say whether this Government did or did not possess the confidence of the country. If ever there was a time when that question should be fairly and honestly put to them, upon which they should be allowed to form a judgment by a truthful statement of facts, and by fair arguments and reasoning, and nothing else, this was the time. But have they been allowed to do that? Have both the Government and the Opposition been allowed to go to the country, as they should have done, on equal terms? Certainly not. I recollect many elections, but I cannot recollect any previous occasion on which Government property and Government privileges were used for the purpose of influencing the elections, except to a very trifling extent in 1871, and in that case the House at once put its foot on it. In this election the Government had, of course, the control of the Government steamers, and the Opposition had not. Consequently, no sooner was the House dissolved than one Government steamer started for Auckland with one set of Ministers, and another Government steamer brought the Premier to Christchurch. When the Premier got to the south end of the Island, a cry of distress came down from the constituency represented by the honorable member for Eden, and it was understood that the Prime Minister was called to the rescue. The “Hinemoa” was sent down post-haste to Lyttelton, the railroad employés were told on a certain Sunday they must not go to any place of worship or to their homes, but that they must all be on duty, in order that a special train might take the Prime Minister from Dunedin to Lyttelton, where he went on board the “Hinemoa,” and posted away to the “Garden of Eden.” I do not think that was fair. When the elections in Auckland were secured, the “Hinemoa” was put into requisition again, and came full speed down to Lyttelton; but, as unfortunately

she had been run off her legs, she could not get any further than Wellington, and after that the journey was completed in an ordinary passenger steamer. The Government had the full use of the "Hinemoa" and the "Stella" to rush from one part of the colony to another. If the Government had been fair they would have said to the Opposition, "We will take one steamer, and you can take the other." It so happened that the election for Wanganui came off before the election for Heathcote. Now, if we had had the use of the telegraph and the Government steamer, and if my friend Sir William Fox had been willing to come down in the steamer to Heathcote, there is no rational doubt that the portly presence of the Postmaster-General would have disappeared from this House, and we should have had Sir William Fox here instead. But we had no chance of that kind. We had to trust to the ordinary passenger steamers, and before any communication could be made or steps taken my honorable friend the Postmaster-General was put into the seat for Heathcote. Then, with regard to the electric telegraph, we do not quite know all that has been done. We know that the Government has been telegraphing to a very extraordinary extent, and we have had one ray of light thrown upon that telegraphing in connection with a telegram from the Hon. Colonel Whitmore to Mr. Ingles. We "wanted to know, you know," whether that was paid for. We were told that it had not been paid for, but that it would be paid for. Well, now we "want to know, you know," with regard to the other telegrams. We want to know whether they have been paid for. I have a strong suspicion that they have not been paid for, and that the Government felt themselves justified in using, for electioneering purposes—which are private purposes, and not public—the electric telegraph. This is not the first time this question has arisen. The question arose in 1871 whether certain telegrams had been franked by Mr. Fox on election business. It turned out that there had been a few—I think under twenty. I then stated—and I only intrude this upon the House for the purpose of convincing honorable members that I am not inventing a doctrine for the occasion—"If they [the Government] wished to use the telegraph for political purposes, they ought to pay for it." A Committee inquired into the whole case, and this is part of their report:—

"The charge of Ministerial misuse of the department resolved itself into a charge of Ministers having franked telegrams which should have been paid for. The Committee examined Ministers in respect to the practice of franking telegrams. It appears, from the evidence given, that during the late elections a few telegrams were franked by Ministers on matters relating to the late elections. For the future, the Committee recommend that such telegrams should be considered of a private nature."

I hope it will be found that all the telegrams from the Government have been considered to be of a private nature, and have been paid for accordingly, although it is rather suspicious that the only telegram regarding which we have information has not been paid for. This is not the

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whole catalogue of the misdeeds of the Government in the matter of the elections. They seem to have had a knack of recollecting the particular public works which were required for particular places at which candidates favourable to themselves had to be elected. It is a curious fact that the time for commencing these particular works coincided with the time of these elections. It was quite accidental, of course. With regard to Napier, no sooner was the House dissolved than the Colonial Secretary and, I think, the Native Minister posted off to Napier, and there they remembered that a bridge which was an object of great desire to the inhabitants of Napier ought to be commenced. Shortly before the elections one of those gentlemen drove one pile. I do not remember whether the other gentleman drove a second pile, or helped to drive the first, of this bridge over which the Government candidate was to pass to the floor of this House. There was very great enthusiasm, and, if the election had come off immediately after the driving of that pile, there is no knowing what might have happened. But some little time elapsed, the enthusiasm evaporated, and the bridge did not carry over the Government candidate.

Mr. MACANDREW.—We shall know better next time.

Mr. HALL.—No doubt. Because Napier has been so very ungrateful, the honorable gentleman will know better next time. My honorable friend the Minister of Mines represents a constituency on the West Coast which is not one of those large constituencies which the seconder of the Address in Reply referred to. I believe that, when the measure for the adjustment of the representation comes into force, there is considerable danger of that constituency suffering. But the chief centre of population in that constituency is a place called Ross. Ross is in a less flourishing condition at the present time than when I knew it, some years ago; but there are supposed to be large stores of mineral wealth beneath the Town of Ross and its immediate neighbourhood. All that is required to develop that wealth is water-power, which could be brought in by the Mikonui Water-race, and this has been the object sought by the people of Ross for many years. Now, the heart's desire of the people of Ross was to have the Mikonui Water-race; and the heart's desire of the Hon. the Minister of Mines was to be the member for Totara. When two hearts can mutually accommodate each other in that way, a happy union is very often the result. So it came about that my honorable friend proceeded to Ross; and I have got—in a paper which also receives the Government advertisements, and therefore can hardly be unfavourable to the honorable gentleman—a full, true, and particular account of the day's proceedings, or, rather, of the two days' proceedings. It contains a statement of the arrival of the honorable gentleman, of his election, and of all that took place. There is rather more than a column of it; but the political views of my honorable friend are summed up in four lines. I can have no doubt that this letter fairly reflects the state of the public mind at Ross on that occasion.

This is what it says of the honorable gentleman's address: "He briefly enunciated the principal points of the Ministerial policy, and stated his intentions on various local matters." I do not say that the honorable gentleman did not state his political views more fully, but this very brief mention of it is evidence of the state of mind at Ross. The rest of the letter is filled with an account of the turning of the first sod of the Mikonui Water-race. There was a procession, in which the Mayors of Ross and of an adjoining town took part, along with the honorable member, a band of music, and a large number of school-children. So considerate were they that the sods had been cut beforehand, and even then the honorable gentleman did not give satisfaction in turning them. The letter says,—

"I cannot say much for Mr. Gisborne's style of digging. . . . The pick he used he used in a slightly better style, but there was room for improvement even in that. However, no doubt he did his best; but I fear that he would not be able to earn a day's wages at pick and shovel work."

After that, there was the curious fact that Mr. Giles, the Returning Officer—who, one would think, would have kept quiet on such an occasion—made a very neat speech. He said he thought this was the most successful "race meeting" of the season. He also brought the agreeable news that the Premier stated that there was no intention of giving up the East and West Coast Railway. With all these influences brought to bear upon the people of Ross, what possible chance would any Opposition candidate have had there? They had a dinner, they went to hear the Zulu Niggers, and afterwards had a ball. After all that, what possible chance could an Opposition candidate have had? What Opposition candidate would have the temerity to contest a seat against my honorable friend? I am very glad to meet my honorable friend on the floor of this House, but I wish he had not floated into it on the bosom of the Mikonui Water-race. Well, then, the Prime Minister has distributed gifts of a different kind. He went to Christchurch, but he could not give the people there a water-race or a bridge; but here was a clock, bought years ago by the Provincial Government, and which had passed to the General Government as part of its property. I do not know what right the Premier had to give away that clock any more than any other public clock, as it was public property. The Prime Minister graciously made a present of that clock to the Mayor and Corporation of Christchurch. I believe I am right in saying that they have owned it a "white elephant," as it will take from 21,500 to 22,000 to build a tower to put the clock in. That was on the first occasion of his visiting Christchurch. The honorable gentleman came a second time. I suppose the Corporation of Christchurch thought that was a good time or them to get what they wanted. Before the honorable gentleman came the second time the subsidies for the past financial year had not been paid. The Borough of Sydenham had, I believe, received its subsidy. I think my honorable friend the Postmaster-General had not neglected his

constituents. The Borough of Sydenham is, to a large extent, in his constituency, and the Christchurch people, finding that the Borough of Sydenham had got its subsidy, immediately telegraphed to the Prime Minister asking when their subsidies would be paid, and a prompt answer came back that they would be paid next day. I have the honor to be Chairman of a large county embracing a great many Road Boards and road districts, and we said that we wanted to know why our subsidies had not been paid. We found that town districts which returned members favourable to the Government had their subsidies paid, and country districts which generally returned members opposed to the Government had not their subsidies paid. Both Christchurch and Sydenham had received their subsidies, whilst the subsidies due to the county and to certain Road Boards had not been paid. I do not think that is a fair way of dealing with the finances of the colony. There are some Road Boards no doubt which have considerable sums at their disposal, but others have none, and are unable to complete the works in hand, because they have not the money to do so. I say, therefore, that on account of their maladministration, on account of their unjustifiable interference with elections, and of their making use of Government property, the Government deserve to be condemned by this House. The "Hinemoa" steamer is Government property, and the captain and crew are Government servants. If it is justifiable for the Government to use one description of Government property and to use one set of Government servants to influence the elections, upon what principle can we deny them the right to use other Government property and other Government servants? If they may use these Government steamers, and the captains and crews of the steamers, why may they not use Government offices? Why not use Government clerks? If this House does not put its foot upon these practices, that is what we shall come to. If a Government that has used special trains for electioneering purposes is not to be condemned by this House, we shall have all kinds of abuse growing up; and it is our duty to put our foot upon it at this very early stage. This is the first time within my knowledge that these influences have been exerted.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. HALL.—Honorable gentlemen can speak after me. Of course they will be able to show, if they can, how very bad other people have been. Whether other people have done this or not, I say it is a gross abuse; and if this House does its duty it will put its foot upon it and put an end to it. What did the House of Commons do just one hundred years ago, when the electors of Middlehurst petitioned against undue Government influence having been exercised by Lord North? The House of Commons passed this resolution:—

"It is highly criminal in any Minister or Ministers, or other servants under the Crown of Great Britain, directly or indirectly, to use the powers of office in the election of representatives to serve in Parliament; and an attempt at such influence will at all times be resented by this House as aimed at its own honor, dignity, and indepen-

dence, as an infringement of the dearest rights of every subject throughout the empire, and as tending to sap the basis of this free and happy Constitution."

What the House of Commons did, then, a hundred years ago, I hope the Commons of New Zealand will do now, in regard to the improper use which has been made of Government property. As I have said, I shall not have an opportunity of speaking again. I can therefore only anticipate to some slight extent what may be said in defence of the Government. I shall not be surprised if these charges of maladministration are passed over very lightly. At the elections—in my part of the colony, at any rate—judgment has in these matters been allowed to go against the Government by default. There has been really no attempt at defending the Government in this matter; but there is an attempt made to cover the Government offences by a cloak, which is called the Liberal programme: this is to be the mantle to hide a multitude of Government administrative sins. There may be an attempt to induce honorable members to believe that, in order to pass certain measures of electoral reform, the present occupants of those benches must remain there. To that I give the flattest possible denial. While I do not agree in the description which the Premier gave of the character and probable result of his measure; while I rather agree with the honorable member for Christchurch City, who moved the adoption of the Address in Reply, that the present franchise is a liberal one if proper facilities for registration were placed within the reach of the electors; while I deny that this proposed measure will enable much larger numbers to be put on the rolls than could be put on the rolls under the present law,—still I agree that it would be a great improvement. It would be an improvement, because it bears the character given to it, not by the Prime Minister in this House, but by the honorable gentleman who represents the Government in the other House. It is a measure for consolidation and simplification; and for that reason I shall vote for it. I do not believe it will really enable 10 per cent. more of electors to be put on the rolls than can be put on the rolls at the present time. With regard to triennial Parliaments, I am not going to say that I do not believe in some alteration being made in the duration of Parliaments. I told my constituents that I believed Parliaments should be elected every four years; that I believed five years to be too long. The people appear, however, to have set their hearts upon having triennial Parliaments. I believe also that, as a matter of course, it is necessary to have a readjustment of representation. In many cases the representation is unequal and unfair. I speak feelingly, because I come from a part of the country which is worse off in this respect than any other part of New Zealand. Canterbury is worse off than any other part of New Zealand. I may remind the honorable member for Auckland City West that my honorable friend the member for Coleridge represents ten thousand persons, all country people,—all people engaged in the cultivation of the soil, and who contribute largely to the

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revenue. That is a state of things which requires to be remedied. Canterbury has not its fair share of representation. It is perfectly true that the representation must be readjusted, and that population should be the first consideration. I do not say that it should be the only consideration. If we are wise, there are other considerations which will weigh with us. I am not, however, prepared to assent to a Bill which would leave it to the Colonial Treasurer, even with the assistance of yourself, Sir, to cut and carve the electorates as he thinks fit. The question should be discussed, fought out, and settled on the floor of this House. Sir, I believe that a further adjustment of the taxation of the colony is absolutely necessary. It is absolutely necessary, because we must have more revenue. But I do not believe that the additions to the revenue lately made by the Government were made upon a fair basis. I think that property should contribute its share of the taxation. I have no reason to feel ashamed of the part I have taken in this matter. A large amount of the taxes on property were put on by the Government of which I was a member. I have no reason to dread any inquiry into my conduct in that respect. The time has come when further sacrifices must be made by property; but the sacrifices should not be by one kind of property only. There should be a distribution of the burden more broad and more just than at present. In addition to that, I believe there are urgently required a variety of measures of social reform. It reflects but little credit on the Government that they have not before now dealt with the question of charitable aid and hospitals, and placed them on a well-considered footing—a footing which shall enlist local sympathy and co-operation, and shall not leave distress and poverty to the precarious and uncertain help of private charity. The licensing question also urgently needs being dealt with, for the law on the subject is in a state of the most unsatisfactory confusion. These and many others are measures which must engage the attention of any Government coming into office. We should not look forward to anything like rest in our legislation. Even in the Old Country there is constantly need for fresh legislation, and in a new and progressive country like this any Government coming into office must endeavour to meet that need. But, while that is my conviction, while I believe that a variety of measures of social reform and political reform urgently call for our attention, I believe there is a still greater need, and it is, that the laws we have got shall be capably, diligently, energetically, and honestly administered; and because I believe that that will never be the case so long as those gentlemen occupy the Government benches, I earnestly hope the House will adopt the amendment which I have now the honor to move.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I am sure it must have been with concern that a great majority of honorable gentlemen present in this House listened to the speech which we have just heard. I had expected a very different speech. Here is a young nation a vast majority of the inhabitants of which are looking out for some great change

in their institutions; are looking out for freedom from the present system of taxation, which they regard as oppressive; are desiring a just and fair administration of the laws, which they say in past times they have not had; are looking out for the measures which are to form the foundations of institutions hereafter to arise; and, Sir, when we long to hear of all such things, the trivial matters which have been mentioned to-night are altogether beneath our notice. I had expected that, when what I regard as an unconstitutional interference with our rights took place, and an honorable gentleman was sent down here from a Chamber claiming superiority over this Chamber, something very different would have greeted our ears. The honorable gentleman has entirely misunderstood the gravity of the position. I take some of his last remarks first. He told this House—and I heard him say it with pain—that two parties were now forming themselves in this country, and that the two parties were separating upon the question of whether personal government or party government should prevail. Sir, there is no such difference at all. The question is, whether or not an old state of things shall be swept away and a new state of things be set up. The honorable gentleman has told us that we have not fairly administered the laws. I throw that statement back in his teeth. I say the people are weary of the maladministration of the laws in past times, when members of Provincial Governments, in some instances, made laws to the disadvantage of the people at large, and, as Administrators, administered those laws for their own advantage. The people long to be freed from maladministration of that kind, and expect that such freedom shall be given to them. I say the honorable gentleman is the maladministrator of the laws, not we. He had no right to bring such an accusation against us. He had no right to say we did not fairly administer the laws. Have we acquired large tracts of country for ourselves? Have we “grid-ironed” the whole country? What fences have we run in order that we might claim preemptive rights, to the injury of the population at large? That is what I call unfair administration of the laws. I deny that in our case there has been any such unfair administration of the laws, and I challenge the honorable gentleman to bring forward an instance of it. I now turn to other questions. I will briefly notice the accusations brought against the Government. First of all, it is said that we pretended we wished to reduce Ministers’ salaries—that we had no intention of doing so, and that the two honorable gentlemen who prevented us carrying out our pretended intention were rewarded by being made Justices of the Peace. I ask, did ever a more contemptible notion enter any man’s head? Does the honorable gentleman think that any member of this House, or any honorable man in any position whatever, would have sold himself in order that he might be made a Justice of the Peace? Does he think a Government could be mean enough—because it was opposed, in some object it had in view, by two gentlemen who were worthy to be made Justices of the Peace—to

exclude them on that account from that position? I say we acted upon no such base grounds as to refuse to put those gentlemen into that high office—as I regard it—because they, on some occasion, opposed us in this House. It is useless for me to tell the House that an accusation of that kind is absolutely absurd, and unworthy of the honorable gentleman who makes it. I turn next to the accusations made against the Government about employing the “Hinemoa,” and I ask the House, first of all, to remember that this is a peculiar country. It is a country divided into several islands—a country in which it is difficult to pass from one part to another, and especially in the North Island—and it is a country in which those who have governed it have always had the services of a vessel placed at their disposal. We did not order the “Hinemoa.” We found the vessel here, and the use we made of that vessel was simply the use that would have been made of any Government vessel on the coast. I maintain that the people of New Zealand as a whole have an interest in their Ministers being able to get rapidly from point to point. They thus gain, as it were, the advantage of having resident Ministers, and the country is saved the great cost of resident Government agents. I claim that I have a right, as Prime Minister of the country, if I think it desirable to make myself acquainted with the people and their wants in various localities, to avail myself of the services of that vessel. And, further than that, I deemed it my duty to warn the people of New Zealand of the exact nature of the measures which the Government proposed to introduce. I thought it my duty to make the people at large my friends, and the willing assistants of the Government in carrying out those measures which we considered would be of benefit to the country. Sir, I say I had a right to use that vessel in order to go about New Zealand and address large masses of the people, to endeavour to induce them to adopt measures of which I so highly approved. Have no other Ministers done the same? Has not Mr. Gladstone himself done so? Has not Mr. Bright done the very same thing? Have not many of the leading members of the English Legislature taken the very same course? Have not English Ministers used public yachts and vessels to take them to different parts of the country? But there is not the same necessity for that means of communication in England which there is in this country. The circumstances are absolutely and wholly different. And I go further, for no Minister in England has carried to the same extent that I have the design of making the people of the country one with their Government. I had a right to introduce my form of government into New Zealand if I thought it the best. I did think it the best, and I used my utmost endeavours to get it established. I think it is good both for the Government and for the people themselves that such a course should be pursued. If I have done right, I am deserving of the thanks of the people; if I have done wrong, I am deserving of their censure. But I stand here perfectly convinced that no such censure will fall upon me. I am thoroughly

convinced that my conduct in that respect will meet with gratitude both at the present time and in the time to come. My conscience is clear. I did as I thought right; and as long as I am in office, and as long as the people of New Zealand desire it, I shall continue the same course, not from any obstinacy or wish to run counter to public feeling, but because it is a course which my conscience tells me is the right one, and which it is my duty to follow. I next pass to the objections raised to the Native policy of the Government. That I shall only slightly allude to, because the Native Minister is perfectly capable of defending himself; but I must make one remark. It is said that when we came into office we found the Native population in a tranquil and obedient state, and that we have quite altered that state of things. I say that before we came into office Native matters were infinitely worse than they are now. Those who know what the state of the country then was will bear me out when I say that murders of the most atrocious kind were committed in the Waikato and in the neighbourhood of Auckland, and no effort was made to punish the murderers. On the West Coast, before we came into office, a Native committed an outrage on a poor woman; and when he was arrested, and the police were bringing him to trial, he was rescued, and yet no notice was taken of the crime. I mention only these few instances, but I could name many others. I declare, to the best of my belief, that the condition of the Natives before we came into office was much worse than it is at present; and I feel that any person who considers what I have said in outline, and works out the details himself, must agree with what I state. I now turn to another question. It is said that we have bribed the Press by advertisements—not that we have attempted to do so, but that we have succeeded in doing so. But let the Press speak for itself. I deny that the advertisements given could possibly have influenced the Press. We were forced by law to advertise in some paper in each provincial district: the Opposition made that law, not ourselves. The sums paid are so trifling in comparison with the amounts which the Press is called upon to pay itself, that they are absolutely unworthy of consideration. I wonder that such a statement could be made. I am astonished that the newspaper proprietors should be vilified by being told that they have been bribed. For myself and the Government we expected hard words from the honorable gentleman. That he should call us “bribers” is not surprising—I expected such terms to be used,—but I regret that the Press should be spoken of in such terms. It was unwise, unjust, and ungenerous, and I am sorry that the honorable gentleman did it. I now turn to his remarks upon the estimates. The honorable gentleman says that the persons in England who lend their money to the colony have always been accustomed to receive from New Zealand a printed Statement of the condition of our finances, and that the credit of the colony would be shaken because such a Statement was not read to the House last session. My opinion is, that no written Statement should be allowed

to be read in this House. It is contrary to the rules. It is a breach of the Standing Orders, of which the Speaker ought to take notice. I once tried to get notice taken of it, and the answer I received was that the custom had crept in. It was not defended—it was admitted to be unusual; it was admitted to be in many respects inconvenient; but it was said that the practice had not previously been objected to. I had a perfect right to follow the English custom and make a verbal Statement to the House. I made such a Statement as I thought was necessary under the circumstances. The House knows perfectly well that it was impossible to make the ordinary Financial Statement. The dissolution was to take place immediately; and as the Government was lying under a vote of want of confidence, and it was continually pressed, by an Opposition in a majority, to hurry on the dissolution, I maintain that it would have been unconstitutional on my part to make a more elaborate Statement than I did. Our position was peculiar. Harsh words were used to us. We were told that we had been condemned,—that we were ostracized,—that we could do nothing. Such was the language of the highest authority in the country. Under these circumstances I made such a Statement as I thought proper and just. That Statement should have been taken down by the reporter; but the mere fact of the reporter believing that I would make a Statement from a written paper, and that he could get it afterwards, and therefore omitting to take down what I said, reflects no blame upon me. I was surprised to hear such a statement made. I will now pass to the question of the Civil Service. It is said that we have neglected the interests of the officers of the Civil Service. I should like the Civil Service itself to be appealed to. I can solemnly declare that I have cherished those interests to the best of my ability. There are many personal friends of my own in the Civil Service—men who began life under me, and whose interests are as dear to me as those of my own relatives: in fact, I should do more for them than I would for my own relatives, because I should think it unfair to say anything in their behalf. I say, therefore, that the accusation is unjust and undeserved. I rest cheerfully on the verdict of the Civil servants; and I believe that the honorable gentleman knows in his heart that I did not deserve the remarks he made. Then the honorable gentleman spoke on the subject of the lunatics. I feel the truth of all that he said in favour of that unfortunate class of persons. Wherever I have been I have devoted myself to the subject of hospitals and lunatic asylums, and I can appeal to the history of many countries for the proofs of what I have done in respect to this question. But I would ask the House to remember that there were provincial institutions in this country which managed all establishments of that kind. They were under local control, and, generally speaking, were well managed. It will be found, in one of the highest works on the subject, that I bore testimony, when I was in England, to what had been done in Christchurch with regard to the lunatics there, and that one of

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the first medical men of the time recorded my testimony in his book. But the provincial institutions were destroyed by ruthless hands, and no other form of government was put in their place. The care of the lunatic asylums by the Government had gone on for a considerable time, and they were in a bad and inefficient state, when we came into office. Sudden reparation was impossible; but all that men could do in the direction of benefitting the lunatics we did our best to do. The subject had been examined by the House, and I feel certain that what I say will prove to be the case. Then the honorable gentleman went on to say that all constitutional rule had been abolished by me—that I had set up an autocratic form of government, and that that was what the Opposition was rebelling against. He said that I was unfitted by previous education to administer a free government. I do not know why my education should have unfitted me to administer a free government. I do not know why I should be charged with being autocratic. I appeal to every one of my colleagues to say whether I have been so or not, and I believe their opinion would be that, if anything, I have been too yielding. Certain instances were produced of my autocratic conduct in this House. The instance was adduced of my advising the Governor to disallow the Land Bill. Well, Sir, I should repeat that advice to-morrow under similar circumstances. That Land Bill was as iniquitous a measure as was ever passed. It was a fulfilment of the course formerly entered upon by the honorable gentleman himself at Christchurch. It sacrificed the interests of the community at large to those of the squatters, with whom he was allied. It prolonged their licenses for ten years, without the country having any warning that such a thing was to be done. The honorable gentleman himself is the person who is autocratic. He has injured the community at large by his autocratically forcing the claims of the squatters upon them. In the case of the Land Bill there was an opportunity of appealing to the people. There was no necessity to pass that law until the new Parliament was elected to succeed that which was expiring. Before such great interests—disposing of the leases for ten years—were disposed of, the Bill should have been sent to the constituencies, because all New Zealand was interested in those pastoral leases. But the House would not do it. The squatters had a majority at the time, and we were defeated upon that point. I was compelled to do one of two things—either to submit to what I believe was a grievous wrong, or to make a last effort by advising the Governor not to allow such a wrong to be done—to save the people of New Zealand. He chose to do this wrong: but I did my duty to the people of New Zealand. I had no personal interest to serve. I have no runs myself. I was a perfectly impartial person, able to judge calmly and coolly of what the interests of New Zealand required; and I fearlessly did my duty to my countrymen, knowing perfectly well that the squatters of Canterbury would pursue me till I died, for the effort I made for the public good. I leave honorable gentlemen to judge whether

they are not doing that now, and whether they have not been doing it ever since. I strove to have in this instance justice done to the public. Then, with regard to the Electoral Bill, I am said to have acted autocratically in that respect; but I did nothing of the kind. The Electoral Bill was passed in this House, and was sent up to the Legislative Council. The members of that body, in their own interest, opposed the Bill. But it merely advocated what I believe were the just rights of the people of New Zealand, and I am sorry that I gave the honorable gentleman offence by endeavouring to enforce such rights upon him and the House in which he then was. But they so altered the Bill that in our belief we ran the chance of a Native disturbance if we had allowed it to become law. We had a perfect right to decide whether we thought that proper or not. What the Legislative Council proposed to do was this: to take away from the Natives privileges given to them by the Constitution. And an accusation was made against me as if I had then for the first time proposed to give the Native population a double vote. The double vote was in existence. Some honorable gentleman says, "No, no." I can only say that, whoever he is, he must be totally unacquainted with the Constitution of this country. He ought not to hold a seat in this House if he maintains that, for he does not know the laws of New Zealand. Well, I found this double vote in existence: I did not introduce it myself. When I had the opportunity of recommending that the vote should be given to the Native population, I gave them a fair vote—that is, the same as the Europeans; afterwards the double vote was added by other persons. But what the Legislative Council required was that we should take away one of their votes without the Natives being consulted in the matter, without their being informed that it was intended to do anything of the kind, without their being asked which vote they would rather lose. If we had incurred all the ill-feeling which would have arisen from the adoption of that course the probability is that we should have found ourselves plunged into great difficulty. The Native Minister therefore said, "We had better pass the Bill as it was sent up to the Legislative Council. Don't allow them to interfere with our rights; we have never interfered with theirs. We sent up the Bill in the form in which we wished it to be passed; and we will promise that during the recess we will inquire into the matter, and next session take away one vote from the Natives." But the Legislative Council would not hear us. I think that under these circumstances we were perfectly justified in refusing to incur the risk I have pointed out. The other points are really hardly worth noticing. One accusation was, that the Government had not allowed the people of New Zealand to judge for themselves as to the proposed measures of the Government—that we had gone about the country—or, at least, that I had—to address the people. Now, that is nothing more nor less than to call the people of New Zealand fools. When honorable members say they believe that the people of New Zealand would allow me to persuade them,

against their wills, to take a certain course and to approve of certain measures, and that they are not able to judge for themselves, they say, in a roundabout way, that the people are fools. What those honorable gentlemen wanted was that the people should not be allowed to judge for themselves. They did not wish the facts of the case put before them. The honorable gentleman himself is the man who did not wish them to be allowed to form a fair judgment on the subject. He said that, by instructing the people of New Zealand on the great questions at issue, we did not allow them to judge for themselves. I say that to give them information, and not leave them in that darkness which has been customary hitherto—that darkness in which the honorable gentleman himself so much delights—to let the people of New Zealand know exactly what the measures are, to explain them fully to them, and then to let them pronounce their opinion—I say that that is to let them fairly judge for themselves, and that I was doing my duty to the people of New Zealand in giving them an opportunity of that kind. That is the answer I make to that accusation. Then, Sir, the honorable gentleman said what I was very sorry to hear. He said that, because the people of Christchurch asked that a subsidy due to them should be paid, I acted unworthily with a view of influencing their votes; and he then went on to say that in some county he spoke of the subsidy was not paid. Well, now, that may be the case. I do not know. But I do know this: that, making inquiries on the subject recently at the Treasury, I found out that of all the subsidies there were only two that had not been paid, and that those two had never been asked for—that the moment any subsidy had been asked for it had been paid.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Quite wrong.

Sir G. GREY.—Some honorable member says, "Quite wrong;" who it is I do not know.

Mr. SUTTON.—I know of two or three that have not been paid.

Sir G. GREY.—I simply said two. It may have been three. I was told two. But I have been assured positively that every subsidy asked for has been paid. The honorable gentleman does not say the subsidy has been asked for? I know that I have stated what I was told, and I firmly believe that what I was told was right—that every subsidy asked for had been paid, and that there was no preference given to Christchurch over any other place. Then, there was an accusation that I gave a clock. This is so absurd that it is hardly worth noticing. But there was a clock which was lying in a state of ruin.

Mr. HALL.—The clock keeps excellent time.

Sir G. GREY.—It had lain for years unnoticed. The honorable gentleman says "No." I affirm the contrary. In the next place, I did not give the clock myself; there was a consultation of the Government upon the subject. I would not even venture to do such a thing as that. It was agreed that, as this clock was wanted as a public clock for the town, it ought properly to be given to the Municipality; and, as it was lying unused, that course was adopted. I will now leave those

points, and pass to other questions. I think I have bestowed too much time upon them, and they really have nothing to do with the main question at issue. I now come to the real points at issue between the Opposition and the Government. I, first of all, begin by saying this: that the people of New Zealand had the freest form of Constitution in the world. They elected what were virtually their own Lieutenant-Governors. There was no nominated Upper House. They elected every member who was to serve the people. They had the power of making their own laws without submitting them to the Queen; they were sent simply to Ministers chosen by the people of this country. In every respect it was one of the freest institutions in the world. The country was well governed under it. The provinces rose to a state of prosperity and stability, and they had gained that position with a rapidity of advancement almost unequalled, and they did that favoured by a Constitution of that kind. The country was in a perfectly settled state. The honorable gentleman and his friends destroyed that Constitution. They deprived the people of New Zealand of the liberties they had. They destroyed a government which was working well, and producing advantages for every part of the country; and they set up absolutely nothing in its place—it must be admitted that their attempt was an utter failure—and they managed to do that by burdening the revenue in an extraordinary manner. They bribed the people of New Zealand to abandon rights that they may never get again, by promising them what they called "subsidies"—"substantial subsidies"—which they took out of the pockets of the people. They took them out of one pocket and put them into another, subtracting heavy charges in the passage, and they burdened the revenue with a charge which now amounts to about £555,000 a year, and diminished the resources of the General Government, I may say, to that extent. The Government, which then became a central Government, had no proper means of governing the distant extremities of New Zealand. It had not been formed for a purpose of that kind. Some years must elapse yet before it can possibly fulfil its functions in every part of New Zealand; and a system of centralization which is in every respect most objectionable has been set up, and the population of New Zealand have been utterly deprived by those gentlemen of local self-government. I say that in that respect they have been the enemies of their country. They may attach to me the name of the "common enemy" of all. I say the man who obtained the Constitution I have referred to for New Zealand was its friend, and that those who destroyed it were really the enemies of all the people of New Zealand. Then, Sir, honorable gentlemen tell us now that they are all liberal. I distrust them. The honorable gentleman who has just spoken, I am assured by those who have consulted his speeches, has always been opposed to a free franchise in this country. He has ever said that the people have no natural right to a franchise—that it is something bestowed upon them which they have no right to claim. Such, Sir, has been the language used by the honorable gentleman.

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Well, I distrust a man who holds those views. I do not believe such a man would give a free franchise if he could help it. Then, the honorable gentleman says that now he is in favour of proper representation. I ask, if those honorable gentlemen on the other side of the House are in favour of a free and proper representation—a representation in proportion to population—why have they, after so many years of mismanagement, allowed the representation to fall into the state in which it now is? Why did they allow that, if they were really attached to a fair system of representation? Why, when they recently passed a new Representation Bill, did they make the matter worse? I contend that they intended to build up the power of a landed aristocracy in this country in imitation of England, in imitation of that power attached to land which has been so hurtful to England for so many years; and that, in setting up the kind of representation which they have set up, they did their best and have partially succeeded in bringing about a state of things such as that which Great Britain has so long deplored. Not only have they done that, but they have secured this further disadvantage: that it will be difficult indeed to wrest from them powers which they now hold, and which they ought never to have assumed—those powers thus gained by creating small constituencies which they could influence. I say that from that fact it will be difficult indeed to make the large landed estates which they have acquired pay their fair share towards the taxation of the country. I say it will be difficult indeed to make those who have realized enormous incomes in New Zealand contribute that proportion of those incomes to the taxes which the population have a right to expect from them. And it will be difficult to bring about a reform of the representation, because it is not to be believed that—with the second branch of the Legislature as now constituted—seats so easily obtained from the smallness of the constituencies will be readily abandoned. There must be a similar contest to that which took place in England with reference to the rotten boroughs at the time of the Reform Bill. The honorable gentleman knows that perfectly well. He did not tell the House that. And he knows that many sit there who do not represent a fair proportion of the population of New Zealand, and that this House does not truly represent the country. And when he said that the honorable member for Auckland City West did not go far enough when he made the pregnant statement which he did to-day, in the able speech we have heard from him, that two members on the side of the Government—the one who moved the Address, and the one who seconded it—were returned by more people than eleven members who were on the Opposition side, it occurred to me that the honorable gentleman (Mr. Hall) who moved the amendment did not himself go far enough. It is true that in a few instances named it would appear the honorable gentleman (Mr. Hurst) did not go far enough; but I say, Sir, that the honorable member (Mr. Hall) who has moved this amendment did not himself go far enough. Let any man

search for himself in the returns which show all the electoral districts of the colony, and then let him deny that honorable gentlemen sit there who do not represent a fair and just number of electors as they ought to do, and that the people of New Zealand are consequently not fairly represented in this House. Then, Sir, I pass to what the honorable gentleman said on the subject of the incidence of taxation. He said he was the individual who had imposed some admirable system of taxation on New Zealand, from which the greatest amount of revenue was received.

Mr. HALL.—I said I was a member of the Government which had done so.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not know what kind of taxation it was—whether the duties were Customs duties—

Mr. HALL.—Stamp duties.

Sir G. GREY.—They do not constitute the largest portion of the revenue.

Mr. HALL.—I did not say they did.

Sir G. GREY.—They form a very small portion of the revenue.

Mr. HALL.—£200,000 a year.

Sir G. GREY.—I believe the honorable gentleman was a member of the Government which imposed the enormous Customs duties that now prevail. I think he was a member of the Government that altered the Customs duties, greatly increasing them. That was a matter which he left out of sight. He did not allow the people of New Zealand to judge for themselves in that respect. That corner was dark in the house of his conscience. But, Sir, I say that the question undoubtedly is this: The people of New Zealand have for years been subjected to an unfair taxation—a taxation by which the landholders have largely benefited by not bearing a just share of the charges of the country. The honorable gentleman spoke of the unfairness of the land-tax. I appeal to everybody to say whether a fairer tax was ever imposed. The only fault was that it was not larger and progressive. As the incomes derived from land benefited by the public expenditure, so ought the amount of tax levied on those lands to have been raised. That would have been fair and just. The injustice which has been done in reference to the land-tax is to the people at large—not to those who pay the tax. The object of the honorable gentleman and of those who think with him is to make all contribute alike to the revenue. I remarked the terms of his expression. His object is to make every individual, from the poorest to the richest, pay in proportion to his property. I say that nothing can be more unjust. Let the people pay in proportion to the sacrifice they make in paying the taxes. That is the fair rule. That is the rule now recognized by all persons who study political economy. I remarked that the honorable gentleman distinctly evaded that question. That is one reason why I can repose no confidence in the Opposition. Another thing is this: No reference was made by the honorable gentleman to the fair and equitable administration of lands—both public and Native lands. He said nothing of the manifest abuses that prevailed in the time past. He ex-

pressed no regret for the part he had taken in imposing such bad laws on the colony. He expressed no sort of sorrow for the way in which almost every acre of good land in the Province of Canterbury has been taken up without the public having had a fair chance. No sorrow or regret was expressed for that; and yet nothing more unfair was ever done. No people have been more injured than the people of Canterbury have been. Let an examination be made into the pre-emptive rights obtained, into the system of gridironing, into all these points, and I am sure that one general opinion will be arrived at—that a change must be made, and that a fair and just administration of land, both public and Native, will have to be secured. Everything was done to build up the power of this landed aristocracy, even in reference to the rents. What did they do? They established a Land Board in each provincial district. By whom were these Boards to be chosen? By the Government in office at the time, who made the law. They were not elected by the people. There was no justice in that respect. In every way an effort was made by the law-makers and administrators of the law to secure these great advantages for themselves, so as to render their position almost unassailable. Then I say that the people not only require a change in the administration of the land, but they also require that some perfect system of local self-government should be established. The country can no longer go on in its present state. The Opposition have not told us what they intend to do. They have accused me: I now accuse them. I say to them, For years you have taken liberty after liberty from the people of New Zealand. You took from them their provincial institutions; you set up nothing of equal freedom in their place. You took from them their fair right of representation, so that a very small number of electors, in many places, return members to Parliament—small bodies of electors who can be easily managed. Under that system of laws the Opposition and their friends principally acquired vast tracts of territory—tracts so large that, if the whole of them were summed up together, I feel certain honorable gentlemen would be perfectly astonished. In truth, in that respect, there was growing up the system of landed magnates which prevails in Great Britain. It appeared inevitable that in a few years there would be a number of very rich men holding enormous properties which they really had no more right to than their fellow-men, and the great mass of the country would be sunk in poverty. That is what we were rapidly coming to, and what we are determined to avoid. The Opposition were determined to resist us by not giving a greater franchise—a fair representation—to the people; by providing that Land Boards should be nominated; by providing that the people, as a mass, should be taxed to pay subsidies to those bodies which had, by means of a plurality of votes, in every respect fortified themselves in a position, and rendered it extremely difficult to assail them. It was necessary that the battle should be fought. Let me point out what the inevitable effect of that would have been—what we were coming to. I will just state,

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first of all, a few cases showing what is the position of Europe at the present moment. I will begin with Scotland. I will tell the House this: that 12 large landed proprietors hold one-fourth of Scotland, and 320 landed proprietors hold two-thirds of Scotland. Now, that is what we should rapidly have come to here. In Ireland, 292 persons own one-third of the island, 744 persons own the half of Ireland, and 1,942 persons hold two-thirds of Ireland, and almost the whole of it will be in the hands of these 1,942 persons when large leases fall in. Take England and Wales: 280 persons hold one-sixth of the whole of England and Wales; and 10,257 people hold two-thirds of the whole of England and Wales; and it is impossible to ascertain what the total number of persons who hold property in England and Wales is, because, in the returns the Government allowed to be taken, they mixed up in England and Wales leaseholders, returning leaseholders as freeholders, and they would not allow forests and commons held by these people to be taken into account either. So that there was no possibility, under that system, of getting an exact account of the persons; but the result is this: that 12,469 persons hold two-thirds of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Now let us turn, on the other hand, to France. In France there are seven million landed proprietors, reckoning down only to those who hold six acres. In the return of persons in England and Wales they have gone down to people holding as small a piece of land as an acre. The result is this: It has been found that much greater comfort, much greater wealth, throughout the whole population, prevails in France, in Germany, in Austria, in Italy, in Norway, in Denmark, in Sweden, in Belgium, and in Holland—all existing under one land law—than prevails in England—while this land law of England entails an amount of wretchedness and misery which it is almost impossible to describe. The result of that is this: that it not only impoverishes the nation, but hardens the hearts of the landowners, who think nothing of the misery which they inflict on the millions. Nothing can induce them to yield these privileges, which keep millions of their fellow-countrymen in a state of starvation, or semi-starvation, and absolute misery. They harden the heart to the sufferings of other people. Great landlords may be kind to their immediate dependants—may give large sums in times of much distress; but they think nothing of the daily miseries of the millions, continued throughout many generations. That I may not be accused of saying what is wrong on this subject, I will give two instances which struck me in an extraordinary degree as to the effect which these land laws of Great Britain have on the human heart. The first occurred while I was in England, at the election in November, 1868. Mr. Dieraeli, addressing the electors of Buckinghamshire, said this: He described the famine of Ireland as a blessing. An immense number of people had indeed died; an enormous multitude had been driven out of the country. That, he said, was a blessing given such as no statesman could confer: it was given

by the Maker of the Universe: it reduced the population in such a manner that the landlords were able to deal with the people. It is quite evident that, if from any country you take a million of people, or any large proportion of people, say one-sixth or one-seventh, those who are left behind must for a time appear to be benefited, because they inherit the property, however trifling, of that large number swept away. But what appears to me a horrible thing was this: that Mr. Disraeli said that these numerous deaths were such a benefit that the people of Great Britain ought to be grateful for the misfortune that had fallen on Ireland. Then, when a voice in the crowd, which Mr. Disraeli recognized, cried out, "Three cheers for the famine in Ireland," Mr. Disraeli assented, and three cheers were given; and when finished Mr. Disraeli said, "Well, you have given three cheers, before this, for things which have not done so much good to man as that famine." Consider what that meant! Instead of that famine being the visitation of God, it was the work of man, beyond all doubt. Ireland was in this state: that the mass of the population were having no other means of subsistence than small plots of land, from a quarter of an acre to ten acres, and the average rent was £10 an acre; the whole of which £10, or the produce which represented it, was generally taken out of Ireland to be put in the pockets of absentees. What was the result? The people were forced to exist on their only means of subsistence—potatoes; and the Government was often warned that the inevitable result would be that a famine would take place. The famine did take place; the most dreadful scenes occurred; and Mr. Disraeli said that this was a benefit for which they ought to feel grateful! Above a million of people died of starvation, and in most horrible circumstances. Any man who reads the account of what took place will have his heart moved in such a way as nothing else could move it. He will hear of fathers being anxious to bury their children in consecrated ground, which privilege they valued so highly that a sickly man was seen creeping along the road, dragging by a string the dead bodies of his two children behind him. He will hear of people dying in houses, of no one being there to bury them, and of their bodies being devoured by rats. He will hear of a million human beings swept away by the most lingering and agonizing of deaths. Yet three cheers were given for an event of that kind. The other day another thing of the same kind took place. There was a great dinner at the Mansion House. From three to four hundred persons were present. There was the richest kind of gold and silver plate, wines of every sort, luxuries of every kind, and from three to four hundred of the magnates of the country assembled, proud in their wealth, proud in their position. What did the Earl of Beaconsfield do? He made a great speech. He told them that landed property in Great Britain ought to continue as at present; that there ought to be no alteration in the law; and that announcement was received with frantic cheers. Their vision was fixed on themselves, on their own wealth and magnificence. This they thought

of, thinking nothing of the millions of wretched beings outside the walls of the Mansion House, of the two hundred thousand paupers in London. Consider the agricultural population beyond London. Consider the people in Ireland, the poor in Scotland, who can get no land, no home, for whom there is no hope, who have nothing before them in old age but the workhouse and a pauper's grave; and then consider these three or four hundred people resolving that no alteration should be made in the land law, which was bringing such misery on millions. I say that no more terrible sight has been seen in the world. We have one type given to us illustrating things of this kind. We have an account of a great feast, in which people drank wine out of vessels of gold and silver, and hardened their hearts absolutely and entirely; but a hand came and wrote upon the wall, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin." And I say, in reference to that dinner in the Mansion House in England, that, although no hand was visible, upon the wall it was written that an end should come to that detestable system under which millions were oppressed, and that the land—which it is clearly the common property and right of all men born into the world to have a fair chance of acquiring a portion of—should no longer be shut against the immense mass of the people, so that twelve thousand people can hold two-thirds of the country, and can keep the rest of the population virtually as slaves. That is the attempt which has been made in New Zealand in the past—an attempt to set up here immense landed properties by means unfair to the community at large. I say that the real question at issue is, not whether we shall have personal government or party government, but whether the system now in operation in this country shall be allowed to continue, or whether a new system shall be allowed to be set up. That is the point which myself and those who work with me are determined to work for. What we feel is this: We know that generation after generation of men appear upon this earth, and we look with wonder as we consider this vast procession coming on. If we try to trace it backwards we lose the beginning of the procession in the dark gloom of history. Nothing exists of them; but we know that each generation, as it came on, has had to contend against the miseries of life, against the oppression of the few over the many; and we cannot help thinking of that with sorrow, and longing that some change should take place. We also know that in each generation there have been some men who have stood forward and have fought for the public good, achieving perhaps but little, but still accomplishing something. We know that those men, feeling that they were in the performance of their duty, and studying the human race, were not mere dreamers, but were benefactors of their kind. They felt that all that gave value to their lives was derived from their fellow-men; they felt that all that gave them pleasure, and happiness to their homes, came from their fellow-men; and they therefore felt that they ought to make themselves useful to those who occupied the earth with themselves. We are also determined to return the benefits

we have received, by doing a service to those amongst whom we live. We are resolved to devote ourselves to that duty. We feel that we shall, to some extent, succeed, and feel certain of this: that so long as we have that task before us, and steadily pursue it, we shall know no despair, that no chill of despondency shall come over us, because we are certain to achieve something. We know that it has taken, as generations came on, many years in each case to build up even the smallest portions of the edifice of freedom which the human race are trying to erect. We are resolved that we ourselves, whatever may be the difficulties we encounter, will do something towards completing that edifice, something towards adding to its beauty, something to make its proportions greater and better than they were. We care nothing for the taunts which are hurled against us, for the puny and contemptible accusations which are made, such as I have noticed this night. We know that we shall succeed in laying here the foundations of a race which will be in every respect a monument to the efforts of those who have striven to build it, which shall be as a light here, at the utmost limits of the known world, lightening up the dark regions which surround New Zealand, and securing to them civilization and Christianity. Whether we are in office or out of office, we can equally pursue that course; we can equally do our duty to our neighbour and our fellow-man. With that object before us, it is indifferent to us what position we hold. We shall hardly turn aside, as I have to-night, to notice the contemptible accusations made to try to darken our good fame. We seek something nobler, something greater; and we shall have this solace in old age, that we can look back on something accomplished here, upon abuses swept away, upon freedom secured, upon liberties gained for the people of New Zealand, upon equality of taxation, upon a system of society which secures a home to all, and hopes to all men in the country. Fortified by these thoughts, by these desires, we will walk calmly, quietly, and cheerfully on in the course we have entered upon, whatever position we occupy.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I never rose in this House with so much reluctance as I do to-night. I feel myself very presumptuous in rising at all, and had the matter been left to my own judgment I certainly should not have done so. We have listened to-night to two speeches both of which, in their way, were very remarkable. They were as different as two speeches could well be. And yet each of them was good of its kind. One we may look upon as a terrestrial speech, and the other as quite a celestial speech. One gentleman confined himself to what I suppose is the business of this House; the other gentleman took us to England, to Scotland, to Ireland, to France, and to Babylon. And yet, after all, I think it must be admitted that he said wonderfully little on the subject which we have to-night under discussion. I have no wings to carry me to Babylon. Every one who knows me knows that I am a most commonplace, matter-of-fact speaker, and if I were to attempt to follow the Premier through

the regions which he has traversed to-night it would simply be a very sudden descent from the sublime to the ridiculous. Before I go into what has been said by the Premier I would like to make a few remarks about the proposer and seconder of this motion, because, after all, I suppose we may be considered to-night to be speaking upon the Address in Reply. I think I may safely say I never saw such a thoroughly trashy, contemptible document supported by two such exceedingly good men as those who proposed and seconded it. If the Government had no consideration for their own credit in the matter, they certainly should have proposed something more respectable than they have placed in the hands of two of their supporters who are in themselves thoroughly respectable men, who do the Government a great deal of credit; but I am quite sure they will not keep them long. There are only one or two questions alluded to by the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews)—who, I must say, confined himself to the subject in a strict and business-like way—in respect of which I shall correct him, and in regard to which he has erred, I believe, through having lately listened more to the high flights of the Premier than to such matter-of-fact speeches as he will hear in this House. The Premier's imaginary pictures, I believe, have led him into the idea that when contesting the Christchurch election he was, in some way utterly unknown to us, contesting the seat against two illiberal men, who were opposed to all those liberal measures which he himself so sincerely and heartily supports. For the information of the new member for Christchurch City, I may be allowed to say that all old members of this House know that the residential qualification Electoral Bill was passed by this House more than twelve months ago by a majority of 61 to 2. Now, I do not understand very well how an appeal could be made to the country in favour of that Bill as against this House, which carried the measure by such a majority. What is more remarkable is that one—and the only one now in the House—of the two gentlemen who voted against that Bill, is sitting on the self-styled Liberal side of the House. It is true I do not think he belongs to that side, inasmuch as he told his constituents that he could not support the Premier, both on account of the despotic habit which he had acquired in his vocation as Governor of the colony, and on account of the infirmity which he had reached in consequence of his age. Under these circumstances, I do not know why he still sits there. I had hoped he would come over to this side of the House. He is a gentleman whom I highly esteem, and with whom I have been often associated; and I should be glad to see him on this side. I think it would be better for him to do so, if he intends to carry out the declarations he has made on that subject. I will not just now enter into the proofs of the Premier's despotism and infirmity, but I will just say that, in addition to the mistake which the honorable member for Christchurch City made upon the subject of the Electoral Bill, he has also made a mistake when he supposes that we have done

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nothing in this House with regard to extending the hours for polling. The Bill I have already alluded to did extend the time of polling by some four hours, when introduced into the House; but before it left the House that extension was reduced to two hours. That amendment, which I did not think was an amendment at all, though it was so called, was moved by a gentleman who occupied the very same seat as the new member for Christchurch City spoke from this afternoon. There were many divisions upon the Bill, and I was myself exceedingly sorry to find that the House shortened the hours. I can assure the honorable member that this is not a new subject in the House. It has received the attention of the House on several occasions, and I believe it will be certainly carried this session, or whenever we come to consider the Electoral Bill. I quite agree with the remarks made by the honorable gentleman with regard to the simplification of the mode of registration. I do not know if we are to take the Bill introduced into the House last session by the Government as a sample of what we are to expect this session. If so, I must say that, so far from simplifying the mode of registration, that Bill has made registration so exceedingly difficult and complicated under the residential claim that some of my constituents would have to spend more to register a vote than would enable them to buy a piece of land and build a whare to qualify themselves as householders. They would have to ride 150 miles over the country each way—300 miles in all—beside a paying 2s. when they got to the registration office. If that is what is called a liberal measure, I must confess I have forsaken the Liberal party altogether. I do not want any such liberal measures. The honorable member who seconded this Reply to the Speech gave the House abundant proofs that we shall often hear him in this House, and hear him with a great deal of pleasure. At the same time, he exhibited a great deal more of the combative spirit than was exhibited by the honorable member for Christchurch City; and, singular to say, he will always have to remember that his first blow in this House was struck at the wrong man—he knocked the wrong man down. He began by asserting very vehemently that it was idle to deny that the great liberal measures have been before the country, and have been decided upon favourably by the country. That is just what no one does deny; on the contrary, we complain that measures about which there was no difference of opinion in this House were dangled before the country to hide the real question at issue. What we complain of is, that the question whether these gentlemen were qualified, whether they were competent, whether they were capable, whether they were honest enough to hold those seats and administer the government of the country, was the proper question to go to the country. But they chose to say, "We are the advocates of liberal measures, and those other fellows are the advocates of anything but liberal measures—they are tyrants and Conservatives;" when the real fact was, that the House had carried those measures—either carried them or pressed them upon

the Government. It was the Premier who resisted them and prevented them becoming the law of the country, although he had the audacity to go to the country and say not one word about the incapacity or mismanagement he had shown in his conduct of the business of the country—which was the real ground on which his Government was condemned—but simply boast about liberal measures, which the House was far more anxious to pass than he was. I hope the honorable member for Auckland City West did not intend to speak in the slighting manner in which he did about the Native disturbances. He spoke about men of the same family, all dark-skinned, killing one another as if it was of no consequence. I am sure he did not mean to insinuate anything of the kind. Whatever may be said about the position the Government has placed us in, the House will unanimously deplore, without any consideration of party questions, that such things should be taking place among any race in this country—that the Government should be in the position of being unable to say that life and property, whether Native or otherwise, shall be secure by the law of the land. There was one remark made by the honorable member that gives me great hopes of him for the future, although undoubtedly it was the weakest part of his speech, and that was the remark in which he told us, with a great deal of guileless simplicity, that the Premier had assured him confidentially that he wanted nothing but what was right. I am sure there is not a young Greyite in this House who has not been assured the same thing in the most confidential manner by the Premier. It is little more than twelve months ago since another gentleman came into the House, and seconded the Address in Reply, who said much the same thing. When he came into the House he really believed in good faith that the Premier was fighting with some great squatters, land speculators, or land-sharks in the House; but, after spending one session here, he began to find that these land-sharks and squatters were not in existence here. He began to see that the Government were very much more fond of dangle liberal measures before the House and the country than of making them law; and, after spending, as I said, one session in the House—after having convinced himself that he could not expect from the Government what in his younger and more sanguine days he had expected—I find him thus speaking to his constituents, or, rather, to those who have rejected him on account of his following out his convictions. I may say I believe that every one who heard the two speeches—that is, the speeches of the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply last year—immediately came to the conclusion that the proposer was a member who would follow his party, while the seconder was one who would follow his conscience. I believe they both followed in their own ways until they got on opposite benches; and, when honorable gentlemen who come here are disposed to follow their consciences, they will be very liable to get into the same position that Mr. Hobbs got into so readily. Mr. Hobbs says, after an experience of one session,—

"Why am I such a marked man? I will tell you why it is. Sir George Grey and Mr. Sheehan did not want me there to look into Native affairs. There was never such a thing heard of before as a Premier and two of his henchmen going into another electorate to oppose a man who had dared to be honest. I had only drawn the curtain a little bit aside—just a very little bit aside—and they saw the noise it had created. It is a wonder to me that the people have stood it so long. How the country submits to be fooled is a matter of astonishment to me. I am sure you will soon find out that Greyism is not liberalism—that setting labour against capital is not liberalism. You will yet find out that Sir George Grey's professions of liberalism are not very sincere. If they had been, he had an opportunity of carrying them a year ago. The House was favourable, but the Government was not. I am quite confident that the time is not far distant when the Grey delusion and snare will be exploded."

I do not say it in any disparagement of gentlemen on the other side—for no one has a greater respect for the young Greyites than I have—but there is something about the Greyites introduced to this House which puts me in mind of the young greyhounds lately introduced into Canterbury. The owners of these dogs have found that, when they are allowed in the field after the hare too often, they cease to take all the turns and bends they should do. They do not follow the hare round all the corners and turnings; they take to "running cunning." Now, I have noticed that when these young Greyites have seen Sir George Grey only once in three or four years, and have only heard once that set stock speech against the land-sharks and landowners, and so on, they are prepared to follow him implicitly, to take all the bends and turns through which he would lead them; but, when they come into the House, and when they hear the Premier day after day, see him day after day, when they see the course he takes in this House, and the companions he chooses for his support and surroundings, by some means they soon begin to run cunning. They run on their own account; they may choose devious ways of their own, but they do not follow him. Those who are disposed in the same direction may take a course of their own, while others, who are of a different opinion, take a course widely divergent from that of the Premier. I have been thinking that, after what has been said about the representation of the colony, a more simple answer could be given than that given by the leader of the Opposition to the remark made by the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. Hurst) in reference to representation on the basis of population. He spoke in a manner that was calculated to pain my feelings about the contemptible number of the constituents in my district; but if he had mixed up my constituents with those of Christchurch, the result would have been that the whole number of the candidates returned by Christchurch would have been anti-Greyites. The gentleman who opposed me certainly was not a Greyite, because the Premier and his Colonial

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Secretary knew that a Greyite would have stood no chance in the district; so that if my district had been tacked on to Christchurch the result would have been that no Greyite would have been returned for Christchurch. That effectually answers the objection. With regard to these young recruits, before I leave them I might say Napoleon used to speak of his recruits as "food for cannon," but Sir George Grey probably calls his recruits "food for gammon," though perhaps they are not so much "food for gammon" as the "produce of gammon." But they dissolve away as soon as they become exposed to the searching light of truths and facts which they are exposed to in this House, and thus he will require a large constant supply of recruits if he is to keep up anything like a working majority in the House. When the Premier began to-night he told us he had expected a different speech from that which he had heard from the leader of the Opposition. I have no doubt the wish was father to the thought—that he would have liked to have heard a different speech from the one he heard from the leader of the Opposition. I can say that I never in my life heard an hour and a half better spent. There was not the waste of a minute or a word. The whole of the speech was to the point. It was upon a subject upon which the honorable member had a right to speak and to which the House had a right to listen. It was as strong and condemnatory an array of unanswerable facts as was ever stated in any Legislative Assembly in the world. It may suit the Hon. the Premier to speak of the charges made in that speech as contemptible. Compared with Babylon, Europe, and many other places, New Zealand may be a very contemptible place; but, contemptible or not contemptible, New Zealand is the question which we have to discuss here. New Zealand is the subject we have to take into consideration when we are asked whether men are fit to sit on those benches or not. It may be sore to the feelings of men or communities to hear such facts as were brought forward to-night, but our duty is, not to discuss matters that do not immediately affect us, but to take into consideration such questions as have been submitted to this House by the leader of the Opposition to-night. Sir, in the very small part of the Premier's speech which was devoted to any answer, or anything that could be called an answer, it was remarkable that he seemed to expect that in replying to the facts which had been related with so much veracity, so much detail, and in such a manner that no one could say that if they were untrue they could not be easily answered—it is remarkable that the Premier expected us to take his mere assertion that such things were not true, without any proof whatever. Upon the question of the management of the lunatic asylums, what could have been easier than for the Premier to have pointed out what he had done for those asylums, what attention he had paid to them, and what funds he had devoted to them? Does he expect this House to take his answer to the charges brought by the leader of the Opposition, that they were not true, when he cannot put his finger on a single thing

he has done, or cannot prove to this House in any way whatever that he has not been guilty of the neglect with which he has been charged? Now, there is one subject which I am glad the Hon. the Premier has brought before us. I had hoped that the young Greyites who spoke before him would have referred to it, but they did not do so; and it has been left to the leader of the Government to talk as he invariably does talk on the subject of the Canterbury gridironing. That subject has often come before the House, and I have taken the pains to make a good deal of inquiry to ascertain what are the real facts of this charge of gridironing. I say that I came to it without any prejudices. No one will charge me with having gridironed, or bought land. I have never been in the Canterbury Land Office in my life, nor ever bought an acre of land there. I have been inclined to take the part of those who have condemned this system of gridironing, and, like the honorable member for Avon, the late Superintendent of Canterbury, I have done everything in my power to render it impossible for any man to adopt a practice that I consider would be injurious to the country in the purchase of land. But I do not know that I should be in a position to condemn any man who purchased in such a way as to give him a chance of obtaining an offer of other land when he felt that he would be in a position to purchase it. I say it is very desirable indeed that the Government should take every step in their power—and I am sure those who know me will know that I have done so—to prevent any person acquiring land in any way of that kind; but, at the same time, I do not look upon it as a criminal charge to be brought against any man that, when he had an opportunity of securing as much as he could for himself in an honest way, he did it. I am quite certain that there are very few tradesmen in this House—and I am glad to say that there are a great many tradesmen here—who, if they had an opportunity to take a contract in such a way as would secure to them that, when they had finished that contract, they must have the offer of the next, would not take such an opportunity; and they would think they were no great criminals for doing it. But, notwithstanding what I have said in justification of this, I find, on inquiry, that the quantity of land which has been gridironed in Canterbury has been so insignificant as to amount to little more than 2,000 acres in the whole—certainly not 5,000 acres—out of the hundreds of thousands of acres sold in Canterbury. Therefore I think the Canterbury run-holders, and the Canterbury people generally, should feel it a very high compliment that the Premier, in his desire to charge them with the gross malpractices which he is so anxious to fix upon them in this House, should have said so much, and said it so often, on what might truly be called a contemptible charge and a contemptible subject. I do not think it is necessary for me to say much to-night with regard to the "Hinemoa" steamer. What the Hon. the Premier has said to us on this subject may be correct or it may not. I do not suppose it is very important whether it is correct or is not; but I think, after all he

has himself said on this subject, it is rather remarkable that he should take a course so vastly more extravagant than his predecessors ever dreamt of, and use a vessel which he so often said should be sold and taken out of the reach of Government employ—that he should use it more extensively than any other person has ever used it, and for purposes so questionable that I think no member of this House, to whatever party he may belong, can have failed to condemn such use. I do not believe that the members who sit in this House will for one moment submit to the Government, no matter to what party they belong, using the property of the public in such a way, and attempting with it to influence the free choice of the electors in the election of representatives to this House. The honorable member told us that the advertisements were very contemptible, and not likely to influence the high-toned papers that are now supporting the Government. Well, Sir, I am afraid that in New Zealand we must pay a great deal of attention to these contemptible things. The charges that were brought against the Government to-night, whatever they may be to all the world, are to New Zealand not contemptible; they are very important indeed. I think that, whilst we find that these advertisements are capable of producing such gross misrepresentation as they have produced throughout the length and breadth of this colony—whilst we find that the papers which have received these advertisements are prepared to hold up honest men as rogues, and hold up a thoroughly dishonest, rotten Government as sound and liberal, and entitled in itself to all the most endearing names that can possibly be conferred upon it by them—I think that, when we notice the ready manner in which some of these papers trim when there is a prospect of any change of Government, and are prepared to go round to the winning side, we may fairly believe that these contemptible advertisements have a very great effect upon the side which most of the papers of this colony will adopt. Now, I quite agree with what the Hon. the Premier has said with regard to the undesirableness of reading Financial Statements in this House. I was sorry to see the practice adopted when I came back to this House: it was not in existence when I was in the House in old times. I think, Sir, for this reason, it would be much better that Financial Statements should not be read. I can well understand that a much more elaborate, a much more correct, and a better Statement can be produced by either the Colonial Treasurer or the clerks in his office, and put before this House and before the country in writing; but I do think that this House is entitled to know, by the manner in which the Colonial Treasurer is able to talk finance, whether he understands anything about the subject himself or not. When we saw the exhibition which the present Colonial Treasurer himself made at that table—when we found that he had the figures before him, but was utterly incapable of answering a single question upon them—that he could not tell whether a certain sum of over £300,000 which had been sent to England was still available for use in the colony, I thought it was

a very clear illustration that we could not depend very much upon a Treasurer who had no power whatever except that of bringing down figures prepared by his clerks. We could have done with a very simple, plain statement. We did not expect much. I am sure that no member of this House expects much from the Premier in that line. Facts and figures are not in his line at all. I am sure, little as we expect of him, none of us thought that the exhibition would have been such a complete failure as it was. When he knew that he was going to give us so little, it was not courteous of him to keep us hanging about here a week in expectation that we should get a Financial Statement. The time was short. But the Minister for Public Works had a much more difficult task to perform, I should imagine, than that of the Colonial Treasurer, with all the assistance of his clerks; yet that gentleman gave us a very respectable Statement, and one which, I believe, entirely satisfied this House. I do maintain that it was of infinitely more consequence that a statement with regard to our finances should be produced to this House, because, whilst we were sending Home a Loan Bill to the amount of £5,000,000, it was of the utmost importance that a statement should be made to the House in such a manner that those gentlemen in England who were likely to lend us the money should have some guarantee that the statement was true, and that it was one which was passed by the representatives of the people. Sir, the honorable gentleman talked about the squatters, and about their hunting him till he died; but it is a very remarkable fact that, some thirty or forty years ago, when the squatters were a great power in the colony, the Premier then was upon the best terms with them. He never said a word against them, but invariably appointed them to his own nominee Councils. He gave them land at such very low prices as to enable them to arrest the progress of the country by buying immense blocks, and thus shutting out the actual work of settlement of the best land in the colony. I find that these omnipotent squatters have now dwindled down to two. I find that there are actually, at the present moment, only two Crown runholders in this House, and that it is very safe to vilify them now as they have very few votes. I think we have no reason to complain of the constitution of this House, or the manner in which the different occupations of the colony are represented here. The only two parts of the community decidedly over-represented, I find, are the lawyers and the newspaper men. I am glad to say that we have twenty-two farmers, and we may, I trust, feel sure that their interests will be looked after, because, after all, their interests are the most important interests in the colony. Then we have no less than eleven lawyers. We have seven members whom I am obliged to call "gentlemen," for want of a better more distinctive name. We have seven newspaper editors, proprietors, and contributors. We have six merchants. We have five whom I will call "financiers"—connected with money-lending institutions and so on; and we have three large freeholders. We have two runholders, two manufacturers, two

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mining agents; and two pensioners—and they both sit on the Government benches. Of the fourteen others there are no two alike, so that, upon the whole, the different classes of the community are very fairly represented in this House. With regard to this Electoral Bill, we have heard the Premier speak of it some four or five times, and I do not know for what reason—whether his memory is failing, or from what other cause—there is a different reason assigned every time why that Bill was not allowed to pass. There is one very remarkable fact in connection with it, which, in the case of almost any other person except the Premier, would be damning to him, and that is that the Bill came back from the Upper House in exactly the same state, with regard to the Maori vote, as when it was introduced into this House. If there was anything so objectionable in that state, surely we have only the honorable gentleman himself to thank for it. Therefore I do not think it is worth while to say any more on that point. I would call it "contemptible" if the honorable gentleman did not himself use the word so much; but I think it is unworthy of any public man to quibble with regard to the meaning of that double vote. We know perfectly well what was meant by it. It is true the Maori dual or double vote existed before that Bill was introduced at all. The Maoris had their own special representation, and they also possessed the same power of qualifying themselves as Europeans have, and of voting for European representatives in this House. But what was proposed and resisted in this Electoral Bill was the giving power to vote on the communistic rights which every Maori has, and which would confer absolutely universal suffrage on them, in addition to their own special votes. Such a thing as that was not fair to the Europeans, and even the Natives themselves never desired it. It was a provision which, I am sure, there was not the slightest difficulty in objecting to and resisting; and yet that is the reason which the honorable gentleman has given us to-night for not passing the Bill. I may say that, on the last occasion on which the Premier spoke on this subject in my presence, he did not assign that at all as the reason. What he said then was, that it was thought such an act of insolence towards the House of Representatives for the Upper House to attempt to interfere in any way with an Electoral Bill sent to them that, if he had had his will, he would have had it torn to pieces on the floor of the House as an expression of the indignation of the House of Commons against the House of Lords for taking such an audacious course as they then took. I have none of those feelings against the other Chamber. I have never supported, and perhaps I shall never support, a nominee Chamber; and I have frequently expressed my desire in this House that there should be some better mode of election than that now adopted, and I may say that, since I have seen the action of the Premier in that respect, I am more firmly fixed in my belief. But, apart from that, any person knowing the history of the legislation of this colony must feel thankful for some very wise interference on the part of the Upper Chamber

with ill-considered measures passed by this House. The honorable gentleman gives, as a reason why he was justified in employing the Government steamers and in spending Government time and money in various ways in travelling through the country to influence the elections and the choice of his own judges, that he wishes to enlighten the electors, and that we wish to keep them in the dark. It is generally considered necessary, in order to enlighten persons, that they should hear both sides of a question. I never heard of persons being enlightened by only hearing one side, and no reply. I took care to test the matter when the Premier was in Christchurch, and I found that the electors only heard one side, no matter how glaringly untrue were the statements made; and no one was allowed to say a single word in reply, or to answer a single statement, although many at least of his statements were grossly misleading and untrue.

AN HON. MEMBER.—No.

MR. SAUNDERS.—The honorable gentleman says "No," but I will soon give him proof as to that. I may say that, in quoting anything which has been said by the Premier, that honorable gentleman is placed in a far more advantageous position than any other honorable member of this House in regard to quotations from his speeches. I quote from a paper friendly to the Government—a paper receiving Government advertisements, and supplied with a report taken by the private secretary of the Premier himself. Therefore there can be no objection to the quotation on that ground. You, Sir, will remember, and many old members of this House will remember, that, when the question of the honorarium came before the House last session, the honorable member for Newton (Mr. Swanson) proposed, first, that the £210 should be reduced to £50. The Committee divided, and the amendment was lost. It was afterwards proposed by the then honorable member for Riverton (Dr. Hodgkinson) that the sum should be reduced to £100. The Committee divided upon that question; and the Premier, without making any remark, left the House. The honorable member for Avon appealed to the Chairman of Committees to know if it was not necessary that the Premier should vote, under the circumstances, as he was in the House when the question was finally put. The Premier, on being sent for, came back, and the Chairman of Committees asked him if he had heard the question put for the last time; and he replied, "No; I was thinking of other things;" and took his seat. Then the honorable member for Avon stated that the honorable gentleman was there when the question was put, and the honorable member for Egmont said that, if that was all the excuse needed, most of us could say that we were thinking of something else at the time, and so the Standing Order would be inoperative. Upon that, Sir George Grey rose in this House, and said he had no objection to vote—he did not wish to avoid voting; and he voted for the larger sum. I am sure I am stating exactly what took place. And now, Sir, this is what Sir George Grey himself says. I may say that not only do I know that this quotation is not exaggerated, but I know

it is considerably modified, and the statement I heard him make was more at variance with the circumstances that took place here than in this report. However, it is sufficient to show that, if the Government steamers are to be used for disseminating truth throughout the colony, both sides should be heard. This question was read by the chairman of his meeting at Christchurch:—

"When it was proposed last session to vote two hundred guineas for four weeks' work, did you, although leader of the House, walk out of the House and refuse to vote on the question?"

After the usual preliminary speech about every dear little child being brought up so as to qualify him to be a member of Parliament or a Premier, Sir George Grey says to the Christchurch electors, "I did not like the way in which it was brought forward." Now, as Sir George Grey was both Premier and Treasurer, I should like to know who was responsible for the manner and the amount! He both fixed the amount, and he brought it forward in the way he chose. The honorable gentleman continued,—

"I thought in my own mind two hundred guineas too much. That was my impression. But, on the other hand, I could not bring myself to vote against payment being made altogether. Under such circumstances, I did not vote at all, and I explained my reasons to the House."

That, Sir, is the kind of truth disseminated by the "Hinemoa." There was another thing stated at the same meeting which I think will rather shake the faith of the House as to the enlightenment given to the people by the Premier. It is with reference to the Canterbury funds. It will be remembered by old members of this House that when we came here in 1878 we found that the Government had what we called "trumped up" a claim against Canterbury, by which they got £227,000 from that district—£100,000 under the pretence of some debentures not having been properly signed, and partly because it was said that it was necessary to take the money to complete the survey of lands, or to correct them in some fanciful way. In fact, after taking all our assets, they trump up some fanciful liabilities to charge us with. I am sorry to say that, when we appealed against this course of conduct, the only member of the Cabinet representing Canterbury considered that it was quite justifiable. A Committee was appointed to inquire into the equity of this attempted robbery, and, although it consisted largely of Government supporters and gentlemen from other provinces, they all, with the exception of the Colonial Treasurer, were imbued with such a spirit of fairness that they said we should not be called upon to pay that money. The Government, however, had so large a majority in this House that the Canterbury members were obliged to submit to terms, and they had to take £55,000, instead of £127,000, which was held back from them for surveys. The £100,000 due to the province for Lyttelton Harbour debentures has never been paid yet, and this is what Sir George Grey said with regard to the latter: After speaking of the sums in the hands of Canterbury Road Boards, Sir George

charms the electors of Christchurch with these words:—

"In addition to that, Canterbury has £100,000 due to it, for which ample provision is now made. I took care that that should be done, and at a time when I had no idea for a moment that I should be asked to represent Canterbury. I did it solely as Premier of the colony, from a sense of justice."

Such, Sir, is another specimen of the Premier's truth. And not one of these misstatements was allowed to be contradicted at these instructive meetings of the Premier's. We have been frequently told that the electors have been appealed to, and that they have decided in favour of the liberal measures of Sir George Grey. But that was not the question sent to the country; and in all the speeches Sir George Grey made to his constituents at Christchurch I may say that I never heard him appeal once to them on the real question at issue. He was constantly, as I have already stated, endeavouring to conceal the real question at issue; and he talked solely to them of the liberal measures which, I have already shown, this House was willing to pass by an overwhelming majority, but which he refused to grant when asked to do so. He never said one word to the Christchurch electors on the true question before them when he appealed to them against two men who had supported every one of these liberal measures—who voted for the Electoral Bill, for the Triennial Parliaments Bill, and who demanded from the Premier a redistribution of seats. And yet he and his party now pretend that he went there to settle the question whether the country approved of the liberal measures which those gentlemen opposed, and which he wished to be the law of the land; although exactly the reverse was the truth. He never said one word about the reason why he had increased the civil expenditure of the colony, why he had managed Native affairs in such a way that we had drifted from a state of profound peace and security with regard to both races, and had come, as he himself acknowledged, to a state in which it was only just possible to avert a war. He never told us why he had acted towards members of his Cabinet in such a way that no member of the House with any self-respect would sit in Cabinet with him. He never told us why he had driven one Treasurer from the position in which he was discharging his duty and protecting the finances of the colony to some extent, and why he had not been able to get another. Nor did he tell us why he was not able to present any decent Statement to this House, when he himself played the part of mock-Treasurer. He never told us why the five-million loan was sent home without any Financial Statement being made, and he never told the electors how much the colony was likely to lose by that omission. If we needed anything to prove that he cared nothing whatever about these liberal measures, and that his liberalism was a mere mockery to be dangled before the people of the country, I would refer to the telegram sent to the gentleman who was offered a bribe to become my opponent. He is a person who is avowedly opposed to these liberal measures. He

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does not believe in the extension of the franchise. He is opposed to triennial Parliaments; and he is opposed to a redistribution of seats, because in our electoral district we are in a very comfortable position. He is the last person in the colony who would support these liberal measures. I may be a very useless, and to the Premier I dare say I am not a very agreeable, member, but still I have consistently supported these measures for the last thirty-seven years; and, when the honorable gentleman offered some nice little billet to the gentleman who was opposed to me, he practically showed that he very much preferred a man who was decidedly not in favour of these liberal measures, so long as he would oppose me, as said by him. That was the issue put before the country. It was a great promise made. Nothing whatever was said, and no appeal was made by Sir George Grey, and no attempt made to really enlighten the people to whom he professed to appeal. Now, I will show the kind of enlightenment he gave to the people of Canterbury; how far the people will be improved, and how far the country is likely to be compensated for the expenditure that has been incurred. This is a sample of the speeches he made. I am still quoting from the same friendly newspaper, and from his Private Secretary's report:—

"I maintain that we shall do no injustice by letting those who have thus acquired land enjoy it during their lifetime, and then allowing a new generation to determine how it shall be dealt with. Why should those who have acquired great tracts of land to the wronging of existing people be allowed to perpetuate that wrong? I say the earth shall be used for the benefit of all, and not for a few wealthy families. This is what we should aim at—homes for all, farms for all who wish to have them. When you have done that, you will have raised men who will be temperate, who will really be devoted to their country, who will wish for no changes, because they will have all they desire, and who will make this country one of the happiest countries in the world, instead of a pauper population, which it will be unless you make the changes I ask."

That is the kind of enlightenment which the "Hinemoa" is to be employed to circulate throughout the country. I agree with these liberal measures, but I have a greater belief in the lines of Goldsmith,—

How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!

I believe that if the honorable gentleman succeeds in spreading discontent throughout the country,—if he succeeds in making the industrious, hard-working men of this colony believe that, in consequence of some measures which we are going to pass in this House, they can acquire comforts and competency, lands and property, without persevering in the old-fashioned methods of industry and self-denial,—so far from improving them he will do a great deal in the other direction. I said, in starting, that I never knew such a trumpety document to be introduced and supported by two such able men as the honorable gentlemen who moved and seconded the Address

in Reply. The first portion I find fault with is the second paragraph, in which we are called upon to assert that the position of the colony is thoroughly sound. Now, as business men, who are sent here not to speculate, or mislead the country, or to make unsupported assertions, but actually to inquire for ourselves, we have no right to say that the position of the colony is sound, unless we have an opportunity of seeing whether it is sound or not. We have had no such opportunity. We have had many little indications which lead us to believe that the position of the colony is not sound. We were told by the late Colonial Treasurer—when there was a real Colonial Treasurer, who knew at least which clerk to go to for a decent Financial Statement—that, in order to meet the liabilities of the colony, it was necessary that a Beer Duty Bill and a Companies' Incomes Bill should be passed, and that £100,000 a year would have to be obtained from a land-tax. Now, we know that all these things have not come to pass, that there is no revenue from these sources, and that the manner in which we do meet the expenditure is by appropriating borrowed money for a large number of purposes for which borrowed money ought never to be appropriated: and that does not look as if the position of the colony is so thoroughly sound. The fourth paragraph appears to me to take upon itself an assertion which is not correct, but, as I have already spoken upon that subject, I will not enlarge upon it now. The sixth paragraph calls upon us to express the "opinion that these three measures are so equitable in themselves, and so accordant with the spirit of modern times, that, should they become law, there is every prospect that a feeling of general contentment would be permanently established in the colony." This is such absolute nonsense that I will not trouble the House with many remarks in regard to it; but I never was a good party man, and, although my leader to-night has allowed this paragraph to go by default, I must say that, if I had my way, I should have proposed the insertion of this paragraph in its place, as it would be much more in accordance with truth: "To remind His Excellency that, although his Responsible Advisers are now of opinion that these three measures are so equitable in themselves, and so accordant with the spirit of modern times, that, should they become law, there is every prospect that a feeling of general contentment would be permanently established in the colony, His Excellency's Advisers are alone responsible for their non-existence at the present moment. The first was passed with remarkable unanimity by both branches of the Legislature last year, and only consigned to the waste-paper basket by those who now act as your Excellency's Advisers; the second has on every opportunity been ably and consistently opposed by the gentleman who was last chosen as one of His Excellency's Council; and the third was resisted, on the 25th of September last year, by the recorded votes of the whole of His Excellency's Advisers who were then and are now present in this House." I will skip over all the other paragraphs, and come to the one referring to the railway to the

West Coast. We all know that this paragraph emanates from the honorable gentleman who smiles as I speak of it—the Minister for Public Works. Instead of proceeding rapidly with the railway, as some of us flattered ourselves the Government would do, it is now proposed to appoint a Committee to make inquiry as to the best route, before any work is done. Then there is a very remarkable expression in the twelfth paragraph, which I am rather surprised the mover of the Address should have overlooked, especially as he is a Canterbury man. I can only suppose that the word "especially" has been used instead of the word "except." The clause says, "We desire to assure His Excellency that every proposal for the vigorous prosecution of public works, and especially proposals relating to works already authorized by Parliament, shall be considered with the utmost care." I should have thought that the works we should consider with the utmost care were those to come before us, and not those we have already decided upon. If we have done our duty we considered them well before we authorized them, and it would be rather remarkable to tell His Excellency that the works already authorized would be the ones which we would now so especially consider. Then there is another subject which has rather an interesting tale connected with it. We are asked to express our belief, "that it is desirable the question of how manufactures and local industries may best be encouraged should be taken into consideration." I would add to that, "but that it is also desirable that your Excellency's Advisers should make up their own minds and agree amongst themselves on this important practical question, before they attempt to lead this House." I have said that there was a remarkable tale connected with this matter. There is an association in Christchurch called the Protection Association, which appointed certain gentlemen to put certain questions to Sir George Grey, at his first election meeting in Christchurch, in order to ascertain his opinion upon the subject of protection *versus* free trade. But, instead of giving answers as to whether he was or was not in favour of protection, he made in reply a speech of ten minutes' duration; and the protectionists came to the conclusion that Sir George Grey was a protectionist, and the free-traders came to the conclusion that he was a free-trader. When the meeting of this Protection Society took place shortly after, they discussed the question as to which opinion Sir George Grey held. As one of the candidates whom he was trying to keep out was a free-trader, and the other a protectionist, they were anxious to know whether they should give their votes to Sir George Grey or not; so they appointed a deputation to wait upon Sir George Grey, and they appointed some clever shrewd men. They spent some time with him, and asked as many questions as they liked, and when they came back to the Association one said one thing and another another, until at last the Chairman said, "He must be a deal cleverer than I am who can tell what he means." They were so unable to judge, after all this, whether he was a protectionist or a free-trader, that they

were obliged to come to the conclusion that they could not tell which Sir George Grey was, and that therefore every man must vote as he pleased. A book was kindly lent me by a member of this House in which I think I have found out where Sir George Grey gets his creed from, and his election speeches and election promises. It is rather amusing, and may be instructive to some members of this House, as it will give them guidance upon a subject on which I myself have very often erred. I will in conclusion read a verse or two from the candidate's letter in "The Biglow Papers." The House will understand that the candidate is in America, and is speaking of the great questions that were agitating the minds of American politicians at the time. He says,—

Es for the war, I go agin it,—
I mean to say, I kind o' du,—
Thet is, I mean thet, bein' in it,
The best way wus to fight it thru;
Not but wut abstract war is horrid,
I sign to thet with all my heart;
But civilyzation doos git forrid
Sometimes upon a powder-cart.
Es to the slaves, there's no confusion
In my ideas consarnin' them.
I think they air an Institution,
A sort of—yes, jest so,—ahem!
Do I own any? Of my merit
On thet pint you yourself may jedge;
All is, I never drink no sperit,
Nor I haint never signed no pledge.
Es to my principles, I glory
In hev'in' nothin' o' the sort;
I aint a Wig, I aint a Tory,
I'm jest a candidate, in short.

But the last verse, from the postscript to this letter, is, I think, the most instructive, and it is the one which I believe the Premier has put into operation with the best effect. I think he has been specially using it with good effect upon the Chairman of the Liberal Association in Christchurch. It is as follows:—

Es we're a sort o' privateerin',
O' course, you know, it's sheer an' sheer,
An' there is suttthin' wuth your hearin'
I'll mention in your privit ear;
Ef you get me inside the White House,
Your head wuth ile I'll kin' o' 'nint,
By gettin' you inside the Light-house
Down to the eend o' Jaalam Pint.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to twelve o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 1st October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Readings—Sessional Committees—
Wine Manufacture—Nelson Harbour—Nelson Public
Works—Libraries—License Fees—Aroha Block—
Timber and Grain Exports and Imports—Bank Account—Hares in Nelson—Government Steamers—Kaiapoi Native Reserves—Ballot—Land Tax—Hamilton Railway Bridge—Hokianga and Mongonui Telegraph Lines—Kawakawa-Tabeke Railway—Address in Reply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Licensing Bill, Bluff Harbour Foreshore Endowment Bill, Auckland College and Grammar

Mr. Saunders

School Bill, Canterbury Rivers Bill, New River Pilot-Station Reserves Bill, Kirk's Road Land Bill, Joint-Stock Companies Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company's Bill, New Plymouth Gas Company's Bill.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

STANDING ORDERS ON PRIVATE BILLS.—Mr. Brandon, Mr. Montgomery, and Mr. Seymour.

SELECTION.—Mr. Brandon, Mr. Hislop, Mr. Moss, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Seymour.

PRIVATE BILLS.—Mr. Acton Adams, Mr. Brandon, and Mr. Seymour.

PUBLIC PETITIONS.—Mr. Barron, Mr. Bowen, Captain Colbeck, Mr. Dick, Mr. Finan, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Hursthouse, Mr. Ireland, Mr. Kelly, Captain Kenny, Mr. Macandrew, Mr. Murray, Mr. Richmond, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Shanks, Mr. Shrimski, Mr. Speight, Mr. Swanson, Mr. Tole, Colonel Trimble, Mr. Turnbull, and Dr. Wallis.

WINE MANUFACTURE.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier, If the Government will take into their consideration some method of encouraging the manufacture of wine in New Zealand? He put the question on the Paper because there were in this country a number of small settlers, with vineyards producing from fifty to sixty gallons of wine a year, who, under the present licensing law, were unable to sell their wine without taking out a license at very considerable expense. His object, therefore, was to induce the Government to introduce an Act which would enable these settlers to take out a license at a small fee, so that they might be encouraged to grow vines to a greater extent for the manufacture of wine, and eventually enable them to compete with the Australian Colonies.

Sir G. GREY said the question would be referred to a Special Committee which it was proposed to appoint to consider many other questions of a similar nature. The Government would also take the matter into their consideration, with the view of determining what could be done.

NELSON HARBOUR.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will cause a report to be made upon the cost and best means of improving the entrance to Nelson Harbour, by the removal of the sunken rocks? The honorable gentleman was probably aware that the entrance to Nelson Harbour was very narrow, and was rendered still more narrow by the existence of these sunken rocks, which were dry at low water and ten feet below the surface at high water. For the information of the honorable gentleman he would refer him to a report upon the harbour prepared by the late Mr. Balfour, Colonial Marine Engineer, and sent to the Superintendent of Nelson in 1868. That gentleman said with reference to these rocks,—

"Two small but awkwardly-situated rocks exist in the fairway of the entrance, and these—the Fairway and the Buoy Rocks—should be removed as a preliminary to any other work."

And in the concluding paragraph he said,—

"I shall not attempt to estimate the cost of removing the Channel and Buoy Rocks, as it depends very greatly on the method adopted; but I would very strongly recommend that their removal be at once authorized, and have no doubt that the Provincial Engineer will do the work most successfully, and at a very moderate cost."

Though he (Mr. Acton Adams) had no special knowledge of the subject himself, he felt sure that the cost of this work would be very small indeed.

Mr. MACANDREW said that a survey of the entrance had already been ordered to be made.

NELSON PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Public Works Department have reported upon the resolution carried last session, on the 17th July last, and spoken to again on the 9th August last, to the effect that the administration of the public works in Nelson and the West Coast should be placed under the direction of the department in Wellington, instead of in Dunedin; and, if so, whether the Minister for Public Works has taken, or will shortly take, any steps to carry out that resolution? He had intimated to the honorable gentleman last session that this was a matter of some importance to the people of Nelson, and he trusted to hear that some steps had been taken, because, on the date indicated in the question—the 9th August last—the honorable gentleman said he would consult the officers of his department, and request them to report as to the desirability of the suggested alteration.

Mr. MACANDREW said there had been very little time since the prorogation to consider this or any other matter. Still, he had had several conversations with the head of the Public Works Department upon this question, and the result was that, all things considered, it was not deemed desirable at present to make any change in the existing arrangement, which was merely tentative, and had better not be disturbed just now. It would not be in the interests of the public service to do so, especially as the House would probably be asked to consider the suggestion he had frequently thrown out—namely, that there should be two responsible Public Works Ministers, one for each Island. That was the direction in which he considered administrative reform in this department should be effected. In the meantime, it would perhaps be as well to let matters remain as they were.

LIBRARIES.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS asked the Government, Whether the resolution of the honorable member for Motueka passed by this House last session—namely, "That, in the opinion of this House, all libraries in the colony receiving Government aid should be supplied with a copy of the *Government Gazette*, *Hanard*, Statutes, and all Parliamentary Papers, free of cost"—has been complied with? He was not aware whether the resolution had or had not been complied with, but so far as

he could ascertain it had not, and he had had his attention repeatedly drawn to the absence of these Parliamentary Papers from the libraries in the district from whence he came. People complained that they were ignorant of what was passing in that House; and he now wished to know whether the Government would give effect to the resolution, and disseminate this necessary information amongst the people.

Sir G. GREY said that to carry out the resolution would entail very considerable expense upon the country. At the outset it would be at least £300 a year, and it would be a continually-augmenting expense. The sum of £300 would be placed upon the estimates for the present year, in order to raise a discussion upon the subject.

LICENSE FEES.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS asked the Government, If they will introduce a Bill this session to amend the existing Licensing Acts, so as to equalize the license fees throughout the colony? For the information of the Government he would read a short abstract of the license fees paid in the different provincial districts. Commencing in Auckland, the publicans paid £40. In Hawke's Bay, they paid £40 for a twelve-o'clock license, and £25 for a ten-o'clock license. In Wellington they paid £40 for a twelve-o'clock license, and £30 for a ten-o'clock license. In Nelson they paid £50 for a twelve-o'clock license, and £40 for an eleven-o'clock license. In Canterbury they paid £30 for a twelve-o'clock license; and in Otago £25 for a twelve-o'clock license, and £20 for a ten-o'clock license. The Government would see that the fees paid in the Provincial District of Nelson were exactly double those paid for similar privileges in Dunedin; and he asked the question because, if the Government were not prepared to introduce a Bill to amend the Licensing Act, and to equalize these fees, he would do so himself; but, before taking upon himself the responsibility of introducing a Bill affecting the general business of the country, he wished to know whether the Government would undertake it.

Sir G. GREY said he could not give a very complete answer to the question, because his colleague the Native Minister was absent from the House on important business; but he would remind the honorable gentleman that this question was involved in very great difficulty. These license fees formed part of the revenue of the local bodies, and it might be considered an arbitrary act to take away from these bodies revenue to which the law entitled them, without their being consulted. However, the Government would take the matter into their consideration.

AROHA BLOCK.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister of Lands, If he will lay before this House a return of lands sold in the Aroha Block (late Broomhall's), specifying the number of selections, and acreage, sold on deferred payments, and stating whether such lands are occupied? The question was one which was sure to occupy the attention of the House during the session, and he asked the honorable gentleman for this information with

the view of ascertaining how far the block had been opened up in the manner indicated in the question.

Mr. THOMSON said the block had not yet been opened up for selection, nor was it intended to throw it open until it had been to some extent improved by the cutting of main drains and the partial formation of roads. The block had been in the hands of the Public Works Department for some time past, in order that these improvements might be effected. As soon as the works were well forward it was the intention of the Government to open up part of the block for sale on deferred payments, and part on immediate payments. The object was to encourage the location of as many small settlers as possible, holding from one hundred to three hundred acres of land.

TIMBER AND GRAIN EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.

Mr. BALLANCE asked the Government, if they will lay before this House comparative returns showing the exports and imports, foreign and coastwise, of timber and grain for the March, June, and September quarters of the calendar years 1878 and 1879?

Sir G. GREY said the Government would at once lay on the table the returns for the March quarter of the year 1878-79; those for the June quarter of 1878-79 would be speedily prepared; but those for the September quarter would take a very considerable time in preparation. Those latter returns would, however, be laid on the table as soon as possible.

BANK ACCOUNT.

Mr. BALLANCE asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether there is any objection to lay before this House the letter from the bank giving notice of the termination of the agreement affecting the Public Account?

Sir G. GREY said the letter had already been laid on the table.

HARES IN NELSON.

Mr. RICHMOND asked the Government, Whether they will proclaim hares exempt from the schedule of the Protection of Animals Act in the Provincial District of Nelson? He had been requested to ask this question by his constituents, in whose district the hares had become so very numerous that they were a perfect nuisance, and were most destructive to the plantations and fruit-trees. One gentleman had told him that he estimated his loss this year from injury to fruit-trees and plantations at upwards of £300. Other gentlemen had equally suffered. The farmers also complained that they could not grow root crops, for in a few nights the whole of these were swept away. The consequence was, that the farmers had to take matters into their own hands, and destroy the hares whenever they got an opportunity. Of course, in doing so they were acting against the law, and found they rendered themselves liable to penalties. This they wished to avoid, and therefore asked him to bring the matter under the notice of the Government, in

order that a Proclamation might be issued exempting hares from the Protection of Animals Act. He hoped the Government would take action in the matter as soon as possible.

Sir G. GREY said, if the Government understood that the honorable gentleman really expressed the views of a majority of the settlers, there would be no difficulty about issuing the necessary Proclamation.

GOVERNMENT STEAMERS.

Mr. DICK asked the Commissioner of Customs, What progress, if any, the Government have made in carrying out their resolution, as expressed in the Colonial Treasurer's Statement of 19th November, 1877—viz., "to sell one of the steam-vessels now the property of the Government"? He had seen that the Colonial Treasurer, shortly after the present Ministry came into office, had stated in his Financial Statement,—

"We propose to sell—not privately—one of the steam vessels now the property of the Government. The Public Accounts Committee report on the advisability of selling the 'Hinemoa,' but, before determining which boat to dispose of, we shall be guided by careful and sound advice from officers practically qualified to give it."

This was nearly two years ago, and he had no doubt the Government had had an opportunity of consulting their officers as to which vessel they should sell. He wished to know the result of that consultation, and whether the Government had done anything towards selling the steamers.

Sir G. GREY said it was found impossible to dispose of the "Hinemoa," because she was the only vessel belonging to the Government which could carry troops, or could be used on an occasion of emergency such as must often arise in a country like New Zealand. It would be difficult, almost impracticable, to dispose of the "Stella" at anything like a remunerative price, or anything which would at all repay the country for the outlay on the vessel. Further, it was found that, owing to the large number of lighthouses existing in New Zealand, and those continually in construction, it was impossible to dispense with the services of such a vessel. When the lighthouses now in course of construction were built, the matter would be considered again.

KAIAPOI NATIVE RESERVES.

Mr. TAINUI asked the Government, When they intend bringing into operation "The Kaiapoi Native Reserves Act, 1877"?

Sir G. GREY begged to inform the honorable gentleman that the Act was being brought into operation at the present time.

BALLOT.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked the Government, Whether they will amend the Ballot Act in the direction of dispensing with the numbers marked upon the ballot-papers by the Returning Officers?

Sir G. GREY replied that the question was under consideration. It was one of extreme difficulty. It had been found that the numbers were almost indispensable; but a system had

Mr. Ormond

been invented by which their use might be avoided. If they found that it could be successfully adopted, the Government would have it carried out.

LAND-TAX.

Mr. WAKEFIELD asked the Colonial Treasurer,—(1) Whether he is aware that the Land-Tax Commissioner is demanding payment of a whole year's land-tax on the 1st of October, though the 8th clause of "The Land-Tax Act, 1878," provides that the tax "shall be payable by equal half-yearly payments"? (2) Whether the Government intend to insist on payment of the tax for the whole year in one payment; and, if so, under what provision of the law they propose to take that step?

Sir G. GREY replied that it was found to be impossible to collect the tax for the first half-year on the 1st April. The work to be performed was so great that it could not be got through. Although the tax for the first half-year was not collected on the 1st April, it was then due, and there was no reason why it should not be collected now. The payers had not lost anything, because they had had the advantage of holding the money all this time. The other half-year's land-tax, about to be collected, was due properly upon the 1st October. It was therefore not the tax for the whole year, but the tax for two separate half-years that was being collected. This revenue was collected under the authority of clauses 8 and 9 of the Land-Tax Act.

HAMILTON RAILWAY BRIDGE.

Mr. WHYTE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Government have entered into any contract for the construction of a railway bridge at Hamilton; and, if not, when they intend to do so? His reason for asking this question was, that he understood it would take two years to build a suitable bridge; and, as its construction was authorized the session before last, it was necessary that something should be done.

Mr. MACANDREW replied that no contract had been entered into as yet for the construction of this bridge, but it was intended to take the necessary action towards it so soon as they got the necessary appropriation. He believed it would be two years before the bridge could be procured from Home. It would be a very expensive bridge. As soon as the necessary funds were at the disposal of the Government, steps would be taken to put the work in hand.

HOKIANGA AND MONGONUI TELEGRAPH LINES.

Mr. TAWHAI asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, If the Government will extend the telegraph line from Herd's Point, Hokianga, to Pakia, at the mouth of the river; also, if they will extend the line from Mongonui Station to Kaitain?

Mr. FISHER replied that inquiry would be made into this matter, which required consideration. He was not prepared to give a decided answer at the moment.

KAWAKAWA-TAHEKE RAILWAY.

Mr. TAWHAI asked the Minister for Public Works, If the Government have received any petition or petitions from Europeans and Natives praying for the construction of a railway from Te Kawakawa, Bay of Islands, to Te Taheke, Hokianga?

Mr. MACANDREW understood that applications had been made on the subject verbally, but no formal petition had been received.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—Mr. Speaker, I apprehend that the usual course, as a matter of form, is for a new member to claim the consideration of the House. I have been but a very short time in the House, but it appears to me that the consideration which is usually granted is of such a character that I do not desire to claim it at the present time. The consideration I have seen shown has been of this kind: Pay all the attention you can to him, and then tear his speech to pieces as completely as possible. For that consideration I am not going to ask the House. I am as much prepared to take my chance as any other member of this branch of the Legislature, trusting that the insignificance of the member may perhaps permit me to be passed by without that scathing attack which sometimes takes place upon the utterances of new members. I do not know that there is any particular reason for making this statement, except the manner in which the honorable member for Auckland City West was treated yesterday. The honorable member who followed him deserved the highest credit with regard to civility and mode of address, and yet the honorable the seconder of the Address in Reply was taken to pieces in a most unmerciful manner. Therefore I shall not waste any moments by asking consideration at the hands of honorable members, but shall proceed at once to put very shortly before honorable members the views I entertain on the subject now under consideration. Before entering into the matter under discussion, I wish to state that, having, in another capacity, watched the debate of last session upon a similar motion—a motion of which, I apprehend, this is but the outcome—it gives me pleasurable feelings, as a new member, to observe that the tone of debate in the House has considerably altered from that time. It gives one greater confidence to believe that, whatever may be brought forward by any honorable member, it will at least be treated with that courtesy with which an honorable member should be treated. I may say that, from my reading of *Hansard* and my attendance here in another capacity, my feelings with respect to the character of the proceedings of last session were not at all what they now are. I congratulate the House, and the honorable gentleman who we may assume is the leader of the Opposition, on this very desirable change that has taken place, as it will give such a tone to future discussion as we should not have had under other circumstances. I also think that the very large amount of courtesies that have been exchanged by honor-

able members of both sides of the House will have a good effect, and that these courtesies will be continued to the end, if no rash man steps in and disturbs the harmony which should characterize our deliberations. I shall endeavour, in the observations I wish to make, to follow the excellent example which has been thrown out by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government and the leader of the Opposition, and I shall to the fullest extent endeavour to emulate that example. But, whilst I say this with regard to the honorable the leader of the Opposition, I must also say that, having listened to his speech with a great deal of attention, and having made myself acquainted with a few of that honorable gentleman's antecedents, I was grievously disappointed with the address which he delivered last night. I was prepared, as one of those young "greyhounds" who have recently been let loose from the kennel elsewhere, for such an indictment against the constituted Government, and against the men who have been members of the Government for the past two years, as would have fairly taken my breath away. I am not going to do what the honorable member for Cheviot seems inclined to invite all those young greyhounds to do—desert my party; but I am going to say that honestly and truthfully I do believe that I could frame a better bill of indictment against the Government than the honorable members of the Opposition have done. I believe I could frame a stronger bill of indictment against the Government than they have done; but there is this much to be said about it: that, even if that bill of indictment which I might frame were added to the indictment that those honorable gentlemen have brought forward, I do not think that the two combined would be a justification for the amendment which has been moved by the leader of the Opposition. It appears to me that one of the easiest things in existence is for honorable gentlemen who sit in opposition, with no care, no responsibility with regard to the government of the colony at all proportionate to the responsibility of Ministers—I say nothing is more easy, in my mind, than to pile up one count upon another, until one would think the members of the Government were the veriest rascals who could occupy those benches. Nothing is more easy, in the hands of skilful men, in the hands of men who make this kind of tactics their life-long study, in the hands of gentlemen whom I see in the ranks of the Opposition at this moment, who, I believe, from a perusal of their antecedents and their utterances, and their public and private doings, can at a few hours' notice attack any Government from whatever side of the House it may be necessary for them to make the attack. Therefore I do not think, as a fact, that the honorable members of the Opposition who have already spoken have brought any charges against the Government of a character sufficient to justify the amendment which has been moved by the honorable member for Selwyn. I do not think that those charges combined are a sufficient justification for the amendment that has been moved on this occasion. Now, Sir, I will take a few of the things which the leader of the Oppo-

Mr. Spright

sition introduced in the course of his speech last evening; and I do so with the greatest deference, not only to this House, but to the honorable member himself. Before proceeding to do so, allow me to say that, whilst I have firm convictions on questions that have agitated and still are agitating the public mind, those are not ideas taken up for party purposes, but honest, genuine convictions; and therefore, when I find a gentleman of the character of the leader of the Opposition, in his place in this House, take such grounds as he has taken in this matter, it shakes very much that desire which I had to listen attentively to what he and other members of the Opposition had to say, and tells me that I should endeavour to give shape to my own resolutions and convictions. I am not, and will not be, under any circumstances, a supporter of any Government of whose actions I cannot approve; but, at the same time, I do think it incumbent upon the members of the Opposition to show a reason for the course they have adopted on this occasion—a reason which will be satisfactory, not to the gentlemen who sit behind them on those benches, and who are prepared to echo every sentiment they utter, be it right or wrong, but a reason which will be satisfactory to the country, and which should carry conviction to the hearts of the people whenever they hear the grounds brought forward. These are the reasons why we young greyhounds are anxious to know what is the justification for the amendment which has been moved to this Address; for, if no better justification is given than what has already been adduced by the leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Cheviot, I do not think it will influence any of us in the vote we shall give on this occasion. I do hope, further, that some of those young members I see around me will not allow themselves to be caught in the meshes that are being spread for them by persons who have got more designing methods of work than we have. The country has committed to us certain sacred trusts, and we are responsible to the people for our conduct; and, if we are led into an opposite camp to that to which we should adhere, there will be a retribution that will astonish some of us one of these days. For these reasons, I think that the honorable gentleman who introduced this amendment on the Address has not gone sufficiently deep into the matter. I have not taken his subjects in the order in which they were brought forward by the honorable gentleman, but have arranged them to suit my own convenience. I will take, first, that subject which I think, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary by many gentlemen both in and out of the House, is of almost primary consequence—the state of the finances. Now, I thought that on that subject at least we should have heard such an exposure as would have been a complete crusher to the Government. I thought that on that subject at least the honorable gentlemen on that side of the House were such perfect masters that they had only to place certain documents in the hands of their leader to enable him to bring forward such an indictment as would have been perfectly irresistible. But what do we

find? That the whole charges brought forward in the matter of finance amount to this: The leader of the Opposition says that a certain course should have been proposed. The honorable gentleman in power says that a wrong course had been pursued for years, and that he is anxious to bring this Chamber back to the proper course, and therefore does not insert a Statement in *Hansard* which the leader of the Opposition says usually appears there. I take it, from the tenor of the remarks of the honorable member for Selwyn, and from the way in which these remarks were given expression to, that he means to assert that that Statement was designedly kept out of *Hansard* to mislead the country and the Opposition. The Hon. the Premier denies such an inference. I can only say that, whatever the practice of other honorable gentlemen may be, my practice for the future will be this: that, if any other honorable gentleman makes a statement, I will believe him. The Minister states distinctly his reason for the course which he took—a reason which commends itself to the House—and I say we have no right to find fault with him. I think the Premier is completely acquitted from any charge of attempting to mislead the House and the people. The only other matter in relation to money which the honorable gentleman introduced is this: He said that the economy in the public departments promised to be practised by the new Government—then a Government of promises—had not been so practised. He said that the Government, through the lips of the Premier, promised to make certain reductions in the Civil Service, and that in departmental work deductions would be made amounting to a considerable saving. Well, Sir, those of us who were not members of this House during the time the great contest took place—the abolition of the provinces—can afford to start clear. We have no connection with either of those parties on this subject. But, whether or not the abolition of the provinces was a wise act—whether or not it was essentially a necessary act—this I always did firmly believe: that one of the immediate results of that measure would be that the work to be transacted by the central Government must be immensely increased, and that on the floor of this House would be brought petitions bearing on the most trivial subjects, that ought to be settled by Road Boards, or County or Borough Councils. And the immediate effect—and an effect well and clearly pointed out by those honorable members who opposed Abolition—has been to swamp this House with a lot of petty legislation, which would not have been necessary if the people had been allowed to maintain provincial institutions. I say that, under these circumstances, it seems to me unjust—and it seems to me designedly unjust—to get up and charge this Government, or any other Government, with having increased the expenditure of the country. I say such an increase was inevitable; and, if the Premier goes out of power and the honorable member for Selwyn takes his place, he may make no promises with regard to retrenchment; but this may be safely said: that he must continue to heap on appointment after appointment, in order to overtake the public work; and

that cannot be done without money. I take it for granted that the abolition of the provinces is the fruitful source of the large expenditure of money, which would not have taken place under different circumstances—the retention of the provinces. I am not going to touch on all the subjects which the honorable leader of the Opposition introduced in the course of his speech; but the next I will take is that referring to Native matters. I am aware that Native matters are to certain gentlemen the great bugbear of colonial politics—that it is a matter we must get rid of in some way or other. The other day I heard one or two gentlemen who came from the northern part of the colony say that all this difficulty might be got rid of at once if Native matters were altogether managed by the North. But I apprehend that, from a southern point of view, that would not do. However, I honestly believe that, if the Northern men had charge of Native affairs, they would be much less troublesome than they are at the present time. I also firmly believe that, if in the matter of the administration of Native affairs less interference took place with the action of the Government in power for the time being, Native management would be much more satisfactory. It is unfortunately too true that, however much we may plume ourselves upon our patriotism, whenever a Minister is engaged in delicate negotiations in regard to Native matters—negotiations which may be wearing-out a Minister—it is invariably found that there are men of the opposite side in politics interfering with the progress of those negotiations. I ask, why is that? Is it because these men think the proper course is not being adopted by the Ministry in power? Not a bit of it. The object is simply to thwart the Native Minister who may be in office for the time being, and, for party purposes, to make him appear ridiculous in the eyes of the Natives. Now, that is not an object creditable to us. It is unnecessary that I should go into details to prove that this is the case. It is a fact within the knowledge of many honorable gentlemen on the opposite side of this House who are about to vote against the Government, because of their Native policy, on the motion we are now considering. Considering these circumstances, and considering that Native negotiations are at all times very difficult and troublesome, would it be a matter of wonder if Native Ministers failed to accomplish their objects? There is one particular section of the Native troubles to which I should like specially to refer—that is the Thames trouble. In that case a party of surveyors, with their assistants, were fired at, and one man was wounded. I am not going into the details which led up to that occurrence. I will only take the fact as it occurred. When that incident transpired, immediately we have wired all over the colony—what?—That a slight trouble had taken place? Not a bit of it; but a statement that there was an absolute rebellion of the Native tribes in the district where this occurrence took place. To read some of the Southern papers, one would think that every available man would be required to buckle on his armour and rush away to the Thames in order to resent this great outrage.

But what, after all, did the thing amount to? The honorable member for Auckland City West, who seconded the Address, put a good deal of the truth before the House with regard to the commencement of the matter. What I want to look at is, whether there is really any significance in the matter or not. Here is the position: A number of persons in this colony think that, when any breach of the law is committed, it should be immediately followed up by swift and distinct punishment, backed up by force of arms. A number of honorable gentlemen think that in this case the law should have been at once set in motion and rigorously and swiftly followed up, so that these men should have been captured. Now I am of a different opinion. This outrage possessed no tribal significance—that is to say, the tribe did not sympathize with the men who committed the outrage; but there is this feature about the matter: that, if you attempt to go up into that country where the Native disturbance occurred and to apprehend these men by force of arms—which gentlemen from the South think ought to be done in order to the maintenance of order—that moment you would arouse the ill-feeling of the whole tribe. Let us understand the real significance of that in the present case. I have seen documents relating to the action of the Native Minister in this case in which he has been blamed because the law has not been enforced—because an armed force has not been sent up there. Now there are some present before me on the Opposition benches who have gone over the ground, and I fearlessly ask any of these gentlemen this question: Supposing that these two persons who were implicated in this outrage allied themselves to some fourteen or fifteen persons—which was about the number of their adherents at that particular time—and you had sent the strong force then available at the Thames to capture them, what would have been the result? I do not mean to say that the Natives are capable of beating us in fighting—the time has gone by for that; but this I say: A wilful sacrifice of a dozen lives at least must have taken place before those two men could have been captured; and, under these circumstances, I think it is the fools who “rush in where angels fear to tread” who would complain that force was not used. It appears to me that the proposition made by the Native Minister at the time indicated the correct action to take under the circumstances. I may say I have never spoken to the Native Minister upon this subject in my life. I know nothing of what his opinions are, except by his public utterances; but I say this: that the course he took regarding that matter immediately commended itself to my judgment; and I think it would commend itself to all persons desirous of taking an impartial view of the occurrence. And what did he do? He said he would hold the whole tribe responsible for the action of these men, and that, if they were not given up, he would take the land of the tribe to which they belonged. If that were done, what would be the effect? I honestly believe the result would be something of this nature: that the tribe, rather than lose their land, would give up the prisoners. But, sup-

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pose that were not the result, is there a single member of this House so far forgetful of the interests of the country and the lives of the people who would necessarily suffer in a contest, as to say that it is worth our while to sacrifice certainly a dozen or fourteen European lives in order to arrest these two men? I do not think there is one who, in a serious, thoughtful moment, would say so. But I do know there are some men in the country who think the sufferings of other men are nothing—who are quite willing to see other men shed their blood, but who, when it comes to shedding their own blood or facing danger themselves, become aware that it is altogether another matter; men who, while it was purely a matter of sending the Thames Constabulary or the Thames Volunteers up to the scene of the outrage, think it a clear case they should be sent, but who, if men had to be sent from Taranaki headed by the honorable member opposite, would regard it from a different and more correct point of view. No man looks at a matter so clearly as he who has to engage in it; and, while there were to be found at the Thames men as brave as the colony could produce—men prepared to sacrifice everything, to do and to dare anything, for the good of the colony—still it would have been unwise to call upon them for this sacrifice without absolute necessity. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the Native Minister took the right course. Under these circumstances, I do not think Native affairs are being handled so very badly, after all; and I apprehend, before this Thames affair is settled, the House will unanimously concur—if not by a regularly formal vote, certainly by acquiescence—that the course pursued by the Native Minister was the only course he could follow as a man who valued the lives of his fellow-settlers, and who knew that the credit of the colony would be shaken if anything in the nature of a conflict were to take place. I will waste very little more of the time of the House with respect to Native matters, because I think there is a general agreement of opinion that, whatever faults the Native Minister may possess, his management of Native affairs is not open to the reproach some people attempt to cast upon it. I will only say, further, with regard to this particular matter, that in my opinion the land on which this disturbance occurred could be most advantageously occupied by armed settlers. If it has been decided that the land shall be taken as a penalty for this offence, it might well be occupied by a band of armed men, and for this reason: that, through that same ground, or very close to it, there has been a road in dispute for a considerable period past. Let that road be pushed on. I do not mean that immediately the land is taken it should be occupied as I have described; but let it be gradually taken up in this way, and it will have a quietening effect upon the Natives themselves. With regard to Native matters generally, the honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition suggests that one of the faults of the Native Minister has been that he has not availed himself sufficiently of the services of the Native chiefs. On the other hand, he also complains that the vote for expenditure in

the Native Department has been exceeded. I am not going to say anything derogatory to the chiefs of the Native people; but the chiefs of the Native people are like the chiefs of the people of any other colour—they like to be paid for their services; and, if you want to take the Native chiefs into your confidence and to get their help, you will have to pay them for it. I apprehend the idea is to make these Native chiefs assessors; but that has been done to a large extent, and it should be borne in mind it must mean a further expenditure in Native matters, so that it is inconsistent to recommend getting the assistance of Native chiefs, and then to complain that the limit of expenditure has been exceeded in consequence of that having been done. The next thing I will allude to is a very difficult matter indeed. It relates to the great Fourth Estate—the Press. I think nothing could be more derogatory to the character of the Ministry, to the character of the House, or to the character of the colonial Press itself, than to say that the Press is capable of being bribed. It is evident that the Press in this colony exercises a far greater influence, whether for weal or for woe, than does the Press in older countries. To a great extent people in this colony never think for themselves. They put it out to be done for them; and very well done it is, in some instances. Often the advice tendered by the Press is really of a very sound character, well worth following and acting up to, though there is sometimes advice given of an opposite description, and I suppose it depends very much upon the stand we take with reference to the advice whether we consider it good or bad. However, what I wish to say is this: that it does not appear very complimentary to the Press, or complimentary to that large section of the members of this House who are supposed to belong to the Press-gang, to suppose that a paltry Government advertisement will have the effect of changing the tenor of their articles either one way or the other. But if it be true, then I mourn for the Press that could do such things, and I mourn for the Government that could tempt the Press to do those things. But I say that there is no truth in those accusations. There may be some little truth in some very small cases, but, taking the large bulk of the New Zealand Press, there is not one word of truth in the accusation that it could be guilty of such conduct. The Press is well represented in this House now, and I hope such statements will not be allowed to pass unchallenged by the representatives of the Press. But what, after all, is the amount of these Government advertisements? I think, in one case, there has been a large sum mentioned, but not a single word has been said as to the very small character of the Government advertisements in the many other cases. It appears to me—indeed, I am quite certain it is the fact—that each local Road Board, each Borough Council, or County Council, has far more patronage in this way, in its own particular locality, than has the whole great General Government of the colony. Then, again, there are all the tradesmen to be found in all the different centres of population, who give a great

deal to the papers in the way of advertisements. Does it follow that the newspaper must immediately abandon its own principles and adopt the colour of the tradesmen who patronize it? Not at all. A mutual advantage is interchanged, and payment is given to the newspaper for the advantage the tradesman receives in the shape of the publicity given by the advertisement. If, however, in the case of these Government advertisements, the honorable gentleman proves that it is different, then he will have done good service to the colony; but, until he has given us that proof, I do not think we are called upon to accept his mere statement. The proposal I would make is this: It has been stated that one newspaper is so very patriotic, and so mindful of the interests of its readers, as to put in, at times, a whole column of Government advertisements for nothing. But to my mind it is clear that the reason why it does so is because it really pays,—because the class of readers who take in that paper require that those advertisements should be there. I would, then, suggest that the Government should pay no newspapers for advertisements, but place at their disposal particulars with regard to railways and public works to be constructed, and other matters of public interest, and let the newspapers publish them if they like. The people would then very soon learn to patronize those papers which published the advertisements. That, I think, is the way to get out of the difficulty—to cut the Gordian knot, and to put a stop to all the talk about undue influence of the Press. Some honorable gentlemen laugh, but it seems to me that, however laughable the proposition may appear to them, there is a modicum of sense at the bottom.

AN HON. MEMBER.—Put them in the Government Gazette.

MR. SPEIGHT.—I am afraid that is too exclusive a publication, and is seen by so very few people that it would not be of much use to take that course; but I think that, if the plan I propose were adopted, we should very soon get rid of these accusations. The next charge made is that of Government electioneering interference. This House, no doubt, has a very high standard of morality, and long may it retain that standard; but, however high its standard in this respect may be, it is well to look matters in the face, and consider them according to the varying circumstances of the time. Is there a single member of the Opposition, who inveigh so loudly against Government intervention at elections, who will tell me that were they in power they would not use that power to the fullest extent to turn the elections? I think not. The honorable gentleman who formerly led the Opposition in this House fully recognized the truthfulness of that position, because I commit no breach of confidence when I say that one of the great desires that honorable gentleman had to see the Government turned out of power when the last vote of want of confidence was carried, was expressed in some such words as these: "Am I going to let those gentlemen stop in office and use their weight as a Government in the elections?" These are facts which I am stating with regard to that particular gentleman. He

saw at once that whoever was in power had an immense advantage; and it is in the very nature of things that it should be so. Unfortunately, there are to be found in every country—and in this country as elsewhere—persons who worship the rising sun. If they think a Government will hold its own, they worship it. If they think the Government is going out, they will turn to the rising luminary. And this is not confined to persons outside this House. There are, inside these walls as outside them, doubtful people, cautious people, timid people, who like to see where the sun rises, so as to get within the effulgence of its rays. The chief charge against the Government in regard to this election intervention is that they used the Government steamers for that purpose. On that I may say nothing. The Premier has told us that he did so—he thought it was right—and that he would do so again to-morrow. I say, “More power to him; let him do so;” but at the same time let it be understood that there are other things to be looked after as well as elections at these particular times.—(Laughter.)—Before the honorable gentleman gives an incredulous laugh, let me tell him that, when he states that when the Premier went to Auckland he went there specially for the purpose of assisting a supporter in his election, such a statement is not in accordance with facts. The real truth is this: that, long prior to the election, steps were taken by those whom the honorable member for Cheviot has been pleased to call “greyhounds” to get the Premier to address that supporter’s constituents. It was afterwards announced that a gentleman holding the high position in this colony that Mr. Whitaker did was going to descend from the high pedestal on which he stood both as a legislator and a lawyer, in order to pit himself against one whom he supposed to be the weakest man of the opposite party. He was supposed to be the weakest man—but supposition and facts are often very different things. They sent their strong man armed to rout this puny boy; but, long before that was arranged, it was settled that the Premier should address his constituents, as I believe all members elected to this House should do. I have personal knowledge of the fact that it was so arranged; and therefore it is not right, fair, or truthful to say that the Premier went north to assist in the Eden election. The honorable gentleman who was elected for that district was quite able to take care of himself without that assistance. It needed only the fatal mistake made on the part of the Opposition, who thought they were going to clutch certain seats, and who sent such a man as I have named against such a man as the gentleman who was elected; it needed only the disgraceful party cries then raised to insure the defeat of Mr. Whitaker. When a man like him could raise such a cry as the religious beliefs of his fellow-men to assist him in his election, his doom was knelled out. When such things are done, every right principle that should actuate a man is roused and makes him stand by the weaker side. I say that gentleman was beaten, through the very tactics he used, by a less astute, able, and circuitous man. It was not necessary, therefore,

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that the Premier should go to Auckland and assist the honorable member for Eden, for he was quite able to assist himself. I trust the lesson taught there will be a lesson to this House and to the whole country, and that in future we shall see, when a seat has to be fought for, that it shall be fought for in an honest, square, straightforward manner, and not with sidwinds and attacks upon men for their religious belief. The honorable gentleman who leads the Opposition also says that undue influences were used to get rid of the honorable member who formerly led the Opposition. All I can say is—and I am sure a large section of the House will agree with me—that, personally, I should have liked to see the former member for Wanganui occupying a seat in this House. I do not mean to say that I should like to see him take the seat which the honorable gentleman who defeated him occupies. I wish the “Stella” could have been placed at the disposal of the late member for Wanganui, so that he might have been replaced in this House for another seat, because it is desirable that we should have every class of man in this House. It would be well for us young members to have before us the winning, calm, and conciliatory demeanour of the present leader of the Opposition, and the highly excitable and impetuous oratory of the late leader of the Opposition, so that we might take a medium between them and strike out our own course for the future. I am sorry that a requisition was not sent in to the Premier to place the “Stella” at the disposal of the late honorable member for Wanganui, so that he might have obtained a seat; and I am sure he would have acceded to the request if he had looked to the future result of that gentleman being returned. I think it would have been a great advantage to the Government, and not to the Opposition, if such had been the case; and I believe a fatal mistake was made in not giving him every facility for re-election. However, there are other reasons why I should like to see that gentleman occupying a seat here. He has served the country well in various capacities, and it is well that those who have so served their country should be rewarded with the confidence of the people to the end. But it must be borne in mind that, however great ability a man may be possessed of, if he exercises it against the temper of the time he must expect to be passed by; and I think it was so, unfortunately, in this case. This use of Government power in the elections has been carried to a still greater extent, according to the ideas of the gentlemen who have preferred the charge, but they have not given us much information as to the extent to which it was used. I suppose, when they talked of expenditure, they alluded to what Mr. Sheehan did, and to his conduct in the matter; but I need say nothing on that point. He is one of those men who always remind me of a hedgehog—touch him where you will, he is ready for you. I feel perfectly certain, when his conduct is impugned, he is able to defend himself; and he would be a very foolish young member indeed who took the cudgels up for him. I will not do so. Speaking of Sir William Fox, I may be allowed to express the very great regret I

have felt in reading some of the public prints which previously lauded him to the skies as the *beau idéal* of an Opposition leader, to find that, now that he has been defeated, they speak of that defeat as a great benefit to the party. I think, Sir, such conduct is ungenerous; I think it is not calculated to inspire in men those principles which make them stern and resolute in adherence to the opinions of the party whose cause they espouse; I think, also, that it is unbecoming, and I am sure that those honorable members who have served with Sir William Fox will at least do him the credit of saying that, under all circumstances, he was actuated by a sincere desire to serve the country well. The honorable gentleman wound up his indictment by saying that the Government ought to introduce measures on two subjects—two subjects in which I take a deep and personal interest—charitable aid, and the licensing question. As a member of a Borough Council, I happen to sit upon a Committee called the Charitable Aid Committee; and I want to tell the House this: that if ever there was a Government that endeavoured to bring this question of charitable aid to a final and distinct head it is the present Government; and, if honorable gentleman desire proof of this, they will find printed memoranda and circulars of every description relating to the matter, which have been sent to the local bodies. The proposals of the Government were these: To transfer from the colony to local bodies the cost of maintaining the charitable institutions, and, as an inducement to the local bodies to accept the transfer, they offer a subsidy of pound for pound. Well, warm conferences have taken place amongst the local bodies throughout the colony with regard to that proposal. I think I read that in Christchurch they have formed what they call a Charitable Aid Board, in which they group certain centres of population, and work together; and I think it is a capital plan.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable member is mistaken; it is not so.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I thought it was, from what I saw in the public prints. I have no personal knowledge of the facts with regard to Christchurch. I shall get better acquainted with them perhaps before long from the honorable gentlemen who represent that part of the country. I was about to say that this borough with which I happen to be connected adopted the proposals of the Government in their entirety, and the result is that, to a limited extent—indeed, I may say to the full extent—they are now taking charge of the sick and destitute, and all but the criminal and insane. They raised the money for the purpose from local funds, and they have adopted this course in opposition to other sections of the community, which have striven against it; and why? Because the honorable gentlemen belonging to the Opposition have, during the past two years, held out the bait that the consolidated revenue will be made chargeable by them for charitable aid, when they come into power—because those gentlemen have led those persons throughout the country who agree with them to believe that local bodies will be exempted from the cost of these things,

and that the charge will be made, pure and simple, a charge upon the consolidated revenue of the colony.—(Oh.)—I say, Sir, what I know to be true. In conference with other local bodies on this subject these facts were brought forward, and they alone prevented a union which would otherwise have taken place in order to make the local bodies fairly bear their share of the cost of maintaining these institutions. I say it is so, and that the present Government have sent out printed circulars bearing upon the subject—and if this is denied I will, at a future time, produce the circulars myself—inviting the co-operation of local bodies in these matters, and that in some instances these proposals have been adopted, and in other instances they have been rejected on two grounds: The first ground is a hope that the Consolidated Fund will be made to bear the cost of these institutions entirely, and the local bodies be relieved of the charge; and the next is a fear that, having once taken over the charitable-aid matter, the subsidies that were promised would become a myth and pass away. These things have militated against the adoption of the proposals of the Government. And then for honorable members to come down and tell us the Government have done nothing towards carrying out those objects which are so desirable, so close to their hearts, and so much for the welfare of the colony! It seems to me that they are speaking without book, to say nothing more. Now, Sir, with regard to the licensing question. I may say at once that my idea with reference to the Government taking up the licensing question is something of this sort: that, until this Government or any other can come to recognize certain first great principles upon which the licensing question ought to be managed, it is useless for them to introduce Bills. But, when they fail to do that, is it to be supposed that there is to be a Licensing Bill thrown on the floor of this House to be scrambled over and fought about, and made a Government measure? I have never seen a Government yet that possessed two members who agreed as to the principles which should underlie a Licensing Bill. At a future period I dare say my views on licensing matters will be fully explained to the House, and therefore it is not necessary for me to enter upon them now. The honorable member who preceded me in this debate has brought forth a Local Option Bill, and I suppose the reason why I was selected to succeed him in the discussion was because we are both cold-water men, and there was no fear that we would get quarrelling over anything of this nature. Well, it seems a strange fatality that the very first Bill on this subject introduced into this House should be one which has not been considered by the members of the House who are supposed to belong to the temperance party. I say that the Bill has been introduced with undue precipitancy; and I say, furthermore, that, as far as that Bill is concerned, if it be what I take it to be, I hope it will be expelled from the House. I desire to make no uncertain sound on that point. If it is what I take it to be, I trust it will never pass the second reading in this House. These are the things that

are held out as baits to the young members of this House to induce them to join the Opposition. First, those gentlemen are going to introduce great liberal measures in relation to charitable aid; next, they are going to introduce a Licensing Bill which will be satisfactory to everybody. Well, if they accomplish the latter they will perform one of the greatest wonders the world has seen. The Licensing Bill leads me up to the honorable member for Cheviot. He told us in the beginning of his speech last night that the hour and a half occupied by the speech of the leader of the Opposition was the most enjoyable hour and a half he had ever spent in his life.—(No.)—The words he used, I think, were—"the best hour and a half speech I ever sat under." All I can say is, that I am glad the honorable gentleman is so easily satisfied, because I now have hopes that, young and inexperienced as some of us are, we may give the honorable gentleman some pleasure by-and-by. Whilst I have every desire to enjoy to the uttermost the utterances which proceed from the lips of honorable gentlemen who are opposed to me, I must say that, when listening to the speech of the honorable member for Selwyn, there came over me a feeling of dampness, of dissatisfaction, of disappointment, and of despondency.—(Hear, hear.)—I dare say the honorable gentlemen who cry "Hear, hear," sympathize with those feelings. No doubt they also felt despondent when they listened to the speech of the honorable member, but despondent from an altogether different reason from that which operated with me. I felt despondent at this: that here is an amendment tacked on to an Address—an amendment which implies censure upon the Government in the most serious of forms—and it is based upon the flimsiest of pretexts, that will not stand a moment's consideration. That is why I felt despondent: that the time of this House and of the country should be wasted in discussing such a motion based upon such grounds. If the honorable members on the other side felt despondent for another reason, I can thoroughly understand their feelings. They were despondent when they saw the lameness of the case which was being made out, and they naturally felt that it would have been better if the motion had taken another form. I am not going to quarrel with them. I do not think it is my place to quarrel or agree with the course which the Opposition have pursued. They have perfect liberty to do as they think proper, as long as they obey the rules of this House. But, at the same time, my opinion is that the Opposition have done a perfectly correct thing. I do not think that good government could have been carried on in this country with such a motion hanging over the Ministry for an indefinite period. Therefore I think the Opposition deserve credit for the period at which they have brought this matter on. I am pleased that they have brought it on in this form; and I am still more pleased to find that they have such an utterly futile case—futile in every sense; for I am satisfied of this: that, whatever the vote of the House may be, it will be the vote of a foregone conclusion, and not a vote which will back

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up the counts in the indictment laid by the leader of the Opposition. It will be a vote which will say, "We will not have this Government as at present constituted. They may introduce measures which would do credit to the heart of a saint or an angel; but we will have none of those measures, as long as they come from such hands." That is the meaning of the vote; that is what is meant by the proposal; and honorable members who seek to make us believe that any other meaning is attachable to it are only seeking to throw dust in our eyes. The honorable member for Cheviot told us, in speaking of the mover and seconder of this Address, that, judging by those two, good men were absolutely supporting the Government. I thank the honorable gentleman for the compliment. He regretted to see two such good men supporting the Government. All I can say is that, when I look round these benches, I cannot help thinking that his regret will be intensified before the House is finished with these honorable members. It appears to me that, if any man comes into this House with an honest determination to do his duty faithfully and fearlessly to the people who send him here—if he means to do his duty irrespective of those petty party tactics which are so freely indulged in at the present time, and by which it is endeavoured to lead young members to believe that this is not the question at issue: that Codlin is the true friend, and not Short—I say, if that is to be the position which a new man is to take up, the sooner he understands that there are certain things now before the country which must be settled before the country will settle into a state of satisfaction, the better. But let him also understand that, if these things which are to be settled are to be rightly settled, they can only be settled by men who have an honest and genuine belief in the principles themselves, and that the object is not to be attained by throwing out of office those men who have initiated the measures, and who have educated the country up to their acceptance. I say it is not to be gained by bringing into power men whom I have heard designated, and, I believe, with good reason, the "governing families of the colony," who have so long had the control of affairs in their hands. I had a number of notes of the speech of the honorable member for Cheviot, but, as it is desirable that he and I should cultivate the closest friendship under present circumstances, I think it is perhaps well that I should refrain from saying many things which I had intended to say. Therefore I will not trouble the House at very much greater length, and will simply deal with one or two small matters that occur to me. The honorable gentleman tells us that these "young greyhounds" who have been let loose and have come on to the floor of this House are honest, intelligent, and conscientious—I think that was the term—and the honorable member instanced Mr. Hobbs, a gentleman who graces this floor no more: that these gentlemen, if they are conscientious, will be found walking into that lobby behind, I presume, the honorable member for Cheviot, who also has had a conscience in this matter, and who found his way across the floor

of the House. But, Sir, I apprehend there are two things required before that is done. First of all, there is the character of the conscience itself to be considered; and next the honorable gentlemen have got to show us upon what ground they claim us, and require that we should desert those principles which we have taken up, and go over to the other side of the House. The honorable member for Cheviot himself can best tell what induced him to change his side of the House. I am the keeper of no man's conscience—I try to keep my own—but I must say that I have honestly searched through the records of this House to find the cause of the honorable gentleman's conscientious scruples, but I could not. I dare say at some future time I shall get to the bottom of the whole thing, and it will give me great pleasure to hear calmly and considerately the motives which induced a gentleman of such great intelligence and ability to be a recreant to the party under whose auspices he came out. He told us, in regard to the number of votes polled at the elections—which, after all, are insignificant things when you come to look at them; but I suppose they are the by-play which fill up the intervals in the solid matter in this House—he told us, in referring to the number of votes polled for certain places as against other places, and alluding to the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews), that, had the votes of Cheviot been added to those of Christchurch, no Greyites would have been returned for Christchurch. Let me tell the honorable gentleman that that argument is like a two-edged sword—it cuts both ways. It means something of this sort: It means that, had the electors of Cheviot been placed under the inspired influence which the electors of Christchurch were placed under, they would not have returned the honorable gentleman, and that happy locality would have been shorn of the delight of being represented by the honorable gentleman in this House. But I can quite understand the honorable gentleman's feeling of contentment. When such causes produce such results, I can thoroughly understand that he is contented with the present position of affairs; but I do hope that, whatever else may occur within the next few months, this at least will occur: that those anomalies which at present exist in the matter of representation shall be blotted out of existence, and that we shall have a fair representation of the people in accordance with their numbers. When such glaring anomalies exist, it is time that both sides of the House should for once sink their party feelings—their personal animosities—and unite to carry out the reforms that are desirable. When these things are brought about, there will be less ground of complaint, and less boasting over happy boroughs such as that of the honorable gentleman. There is one other matter I will allude to, and that is the peculiar characteristic of this debate and the debate of last session. The characteristic is this: Laud up the honorable member for Port Chalmers; laud him up to the skies. He is the acme of a Public Works Minister; he is everything that can be desired; but send “the common enemy” down to the lowest

depths possible. That seems to be the whole object of the Opposition. A reconstructed Ministry is to be the proposal, and, to use a classic quotation which some of you will not understand, an attempt is being made to “sluther” young members. The honorable member for Riverton has been subjected to the smoothing-down process. He has been appealed to as a man of the world, as a man who knows what an important thing his vote is, how he comprehends the situation, and so on. That is the sort of thing that gains votes. Men like to be appealed to. It is in most cases a novelty, and they take to it like mother's milk. But it ought to be remembered that, whatever they do, there will assuredly be a day of reckoning; and if, as we are told, the destiny of the country is going to hang upon the votes of one or two gentlemen who are taking very kindly to the smoothing process, let them not forget that the day is not very distant when they will need all the smoothing they can get; because, after the passing of the Triennial Parliaments Bill and the Representation Bill, they will have to face angry constituents, who will tell them very plainly what they think. Let these young men remember this. Let the old men go their own way; but, if we young fellows are to be worked upon as so many fish to be caught by a coloured bait, or by inducements of a character that ought not to be made, then the sooner we young men stand together and form a new party the better. Now, I should like to see the honorable member for Riverton in that party. I can assure him he is not likely to hold a portfolio under the old party; but then, if he thinks differently, I will allow him to be the best judge. Then, Sir, much has been said about the Electoral Bill which was withdrawn. We heard last night a certain version of that matter, and the honorable gentleman who gave us that version told us that it was a peculiar characteristic of the Premier to place one side of a subject before his audience and to let them know nothing of the other. Now, I think the Premier has been very plain on this occasion; but what did the honorable member for Cheviot say? He said that the Bill as returned from the Upper House was in the exact form in which the Government introduced it into this House.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—No.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I heard the statement, not once, but a dozen times. The argument was that, because it was in the same form, the Premier should have proceeded with it. There can be no mistake about that.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I did not say that. I said it was in the same form in reference to the Maori vote.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—Why, that is all that is in dispute. It was the Maori vote! Very well, Sir; what does it mean? It means that the position which the Premier took up in the first instance was, that the dual vote ought not to be there—that he was opposed to it: but it shows more. It shows that the Premier is prepared to stand up for the dignity of this House against all comers. The Premier has fairly stated the position of the matter, and I think you will find thousands of men outside the House who thoroughly understand

it. It is useless, therefore, for members of this House to make such statements. The Bill was withdrawn because the Premier would not permit it to be altered in the Upper House from the form in which it passed this House. I shall say a few words now upon the character of the vote we are about to take. What does it mean? To my mind it means this, that, irrespective altogether of the measures before the House, the Opposition desire to occupy those benches. That is all I can see in the proposals of the Opposition; and again I will say that I think they were right in raising the question so early in the session. But on what ground do they do it? I have in my mind's eye certain gentlemen who think there may be in the Ministry men so recreant to the great principles we are fighting for that they will accept office under the Opposition should they succeed in ousting the present Ministry. Now, I do hope that, whatever other mistakes may be made, there will be no mistake upon this point. I hope every Minister will give forth such a sound as will destroy all such hopes as that. I feel satisfied that there is no such intention, for I feel certain that the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House will never pass the measures to which the people attach such a high value; and, believing as I do in the ultimate triumph of those principles and the faith of the people in them, I say that, irrespective altogether of party tactics, no Government and no Opposition can cheat the people out of them. They cannot and will not be robbed of them. They will have them, and the members of this House had better make up their minds to that fact. Let me again refer to the amendment of the Opposition, who say that, "whilst we are prepared to adopt the liberal measures which the country desires, we have no confidence in the Government as at present constituted." Now, let it be understood that no reconstruction of that Ministry can take place. There stands at least one solid section of this House who recognize in the Premier an important factor in the Ministry, and, recognizing that, we are prepared to stand by him at all hazards. With that knowledge, I can scarcely believe that any Ministry would dream of deserting him, and I believe the present Ministry have not the slightest desire to do so. But the honorable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House say they are prepared to give effect to the measures desired by the country. Now, let us understand things clearly. The amendment does not say that they are prepared to pass the Bills of the Government. They are prepared to give effect to the liberal measures desired by the country, but they are to be the exponents of those measures, and not the people themselves. They are not going to take the oft-repeated utterances of the people themselves as the indication of what the people want; they are going to give their own ideas of what is good for the people. I do not like repeating the words of any man, but I must repeat the words of the Premier with reference to the leaders of the Opposition, and say that I distrust them. I remember many years ago reading a little anecdote which seems apposite to the present occasion. In a town in France there

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was a very worthy curé who discovered through the communications of the parish priest that there existed among the female portion of his parishioners a strong disposition to a certain vice which shall be unnamed. The poor man's heart was righteously grieved over the matter. He was very anxious about the welfare of his people, and he took the least offensive way to pull them up. Accordingly he arranged that after a certain meeting all the female members of the church were to remain. He then referred to the particular sin in fitting terms, and concluded by strongly condemning it. I should have said that it was a very general sin amongst these ladies. He did not say that they were all guilty of it—he said he would let their own hearts tell them that—but he singled out one lady and said, "Now, I know you all detest this sin; but yonder I see a woman who, above all her fellows, has been guilty of it, and, in order that I may mark her for your eternal contempt and disgust, I will hurl this breviary at her head;" and, as he made a movement to do so, there was not a bonnet in the church but went down. Sir, it appears to me that there are Liberals in this House now who state that they are prepared to pass these measures that are desired by the country. They are prepared to vote for triennial Parliaments; yet their votes are recorded here in this book in a solid phalanx against them. There is not a man that I can name, with one honorable exception—not a man who remains on the Opposition side of the House out of those who have come back—but has voted against the Triennial Parliaments Bill. Yet these men are going to adopt the Triennial Parliaments Bill. Can anything be more contemptible? Can anything be more ridiculous? I am not sufficiently versed in the rules of this House to know if they would permit me to fling this volume of *Hansard* at the heads of honorable members opposite; but, if I were allowed to do so, there would be such a ducking and diving there as would astonish one. Yet these are the men who are going to lead the country to progress and reform; these are the men who have had control of the country for years past, and who have not ventured even to initiate this movement, but now they are prepared to carry it out. I will stop to tell the House why they are prepared. It is because an indignant people say those measures shall be carried. It is because the country's mind is made up that they must be carried. If, honorable gentlemen, you cannot make up your minds to adopt these measures in their entirety—to adopt the Bills, the whole Bills, and nothing but the Bills—then make up your minds that other men will come into your places. If you attain temporary success, if you can stave off the frequently-expressed desires of the people of this country by mauling and destroying those measures in such a manner as to make them useless to the country and an insult to the intelligence of this House, if you pass them in such a form as "to keep the word of promise to our ear, but break it to our hope," you will reckon too much on the forbearance of the people. I apprehend that when these measures

are disposed of we shall have another dissolution. Some honorable gentlemen do not like that; but to young fellows, to young greyhounds whose limbs are fleet, a dissolution has no terrors. And I assure those honorable gentlemen that, whether this Government is in power or the other Government is in power, there is not a constituency in this colony which will not insist that the people shall be appealed to when those proposed measures are brought into operation, and when a fair chance has been given to form a new roll upon those measures. The result of the late election, from a Government-party point of view, has been an eminently satisfactory one. Where are the gentlemen I saw a few months since sitting on that side of the House who denominated themselves by the term "rats"? Echo answers, "Where?" They have retired to the obscurity from which they should never have emerged. Let me say to some of our young men who are in the toils that there is an obscurity in store for some of us if we remember not our faith to guard it. I shall not detain the House further than by saying that the proposition of the Opposition with regard to the composition of the present Ministry is one that, to my mind, is not sustained by any indictment presented to this House. It is one that will not procure favourable consideration from the country—that will not meet with the approval of the country. What the country looks for now is that the men who have educated it up to the present position of political intelligence shall have a fair and honorable chance of redeeming the promises they have made in the past—that they shall have a fair and honorable opportunity given to them, not only to bring those measures into existence, but to see the first House that meets under them. We are told it is not desirable that these things should be done by the present Government, because one or two or half-a-dozen gentlemen of the Opposition have personal spleen which they mean to have out. I cannot denominate it by a more noble term than spleen. I know there are some members of the House who will go into the Opposition lobbies in a few hours or days who would vote the other way if the Premier could be shunted from the track. Such a position is ignoble for any man to take up who lays claim to be an honest, intelligent, and respectable representative of an honest and intelligent people. Let the Premier stand or fall with the Ministry and the party he has led, but this at least will be the record of the future: He did all in the defence of the liberties of this colony which a man dare do.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Sir, I have to apologize to the House, because I am quite unable to follow the honorable gentleman who has just sat down in the glowing terms he has used. I feel that, after his speech, what I have to say will be rather a damper to the feelings of both my friends and my opponents. But I may perhaps be allowed, as a plain man, to tell my story as well as I can. First of all, I would refer to two or three points with regard to which there seems to be some misapprehension as to the question at issue before the House. Take, for instance, the question of

subsidies. I apprehend that, when that was referred to in regard to Christchurch, the objection of the speaker was not to the fact that Christchurch had got its subsidy, but that other places had not got theirs. All over the colony there was a complaint that the subsidies had not been paid, and in no case had any notice been given that a new order of proceeding would be adopted by the Government. The consequence was, that a great deal of inconvenience was experienced by Road Boards and County Councils all over the colony. Then, again, there seemed to me to be a misapprehension of the point at issue as to Ministers travelling in the "Hinemoa." The objection was, not that Ministers should travel in the "Hinemoa," but that Ministers should travel on electioneering business. There could be no objection whatever to the Government steamer carrying Government officials upon public duty, but I apprehend that on those particular occasions the business was not of a public nature, any more than my business was of a public nature when I went about to address my constituents. Then, again, in regard to finance, the objection was, not that the Minister did not make a speech upon finance, but that he showed an evident ignorance of the principles of finance. Then, with regard to plural voting at local elections, I apprehend there is a material distinction between the position taken up by our opponents and that taken by us on this point. As far as I am personally concerned, I am willing at any moment to give up my plural vote. I believe I have hardly ever exercised it, and I am not at all likely to exercise it very often. But there is this to be said in reference to it: We have been told from the Government benches that the reason why plural voting ought to be given up in local elections is this: that there is a subsidy to the local body from the General Government, and that therefore there ought not to be plural voting. Here, again, there is a misapprehension. The amount of that subsidy is but a small proportion of the amount given to the local bodies from other sources, such as taxation, endowments, &c. I apprehend that the reason for plural voting is, that men who have large interests at stake should not, for the benefit of a few who have little at stake, be overtaxed. Now, in my own district there is really no difficulty on this point at all. We are so nearly on an equality, there are so few large holders, that if plural voting were abolished to-morrow it would make no practical difference whatever. But I can well understand that there may be a serious difficulty in districts otherwise situated; and therefore, before the House passes a measure for the abolition of plurality of voting, it should take into consideration the circumstances of those districts where there are a few who pay very little and a great many who would have to pay a large amount. Another matter referred to last night was the election of Land Boards. Now, I would just ask this question of my friends opposite: Why have they not made the Land Boards elective during the last two years? They have had ample means, and the power to do so. Is it not the fact that they have not done

so simply because they found that a nominated Board was, on the whole, a fair tribunal to look after the interests of the country? Before going to the main part of the subject I will refer to one or two other matters. We are told that we are all Liberals now, but that the Opposition want to start a new aristocracy. That may possibly apply to some honorable members on this side of the House—of course I do not know who they are—but assuredly it does not apply to me. I have been a Radical—not merely a Liberal so-called, but a Radical—all my life. Certainly for over thirty years I have worked hard in the Liberal camp. So that, as far as that taunt applies, it does not apply to me, and I apprehend it will not apply to any considerable number in any part of the House. Now, with regard to the setting-up of an aristocracy, I would ask this question: Is there any reasonable man who believes that an aristocracy, in the sense in which an aristocracy is regarded in the Old Country, could by any possibility—by any remote chance—be established in any colony of the British Crown? Why, the colonies have been established as a rule, and their populations have been recruited as a rule, from the common people of the Home Country. All attempts that have hitherto been made to found a new aristocracy have been failures. And why? Because under the old aristocracy that institution was founded upon the right of conquest. The leader naturally was retained as leader from generation to generation, for the safety of the conquerors, and every effort was made to keep the aristocracy in existence. But, here, what are the facts of the case? You have started into existence from a new basis, from an enlightened age, at a time when conquests have ceased; and by no possibility can you galvanize the old style of things into life. I say it is simply nonsense to talk of the foundation of a new aristocracy in this country. Sir, there were a few other trifling things alluded to last night, and, as they seemed to be made much of, perhaps you will allow me to refer to them. If there is one man in the British dominions that I have an antagonism to more than another, it is Lord Beaconsfield—Mr. Disraeli. I believe him to be a charlatan, I believe him to have no political knowledge, and I believe his public career has been an almost unmitigated loss to the country. But let us do a man justice. Lord Beaconsfield is not a brute; and I think that no man, but a brute, would act in the way in which Lord Beaconsfield was represented last night as having acted with regard to the Irish famine. I think this House ought to have the words that the man uttered. We ought to have had put before us the exact words that he uttered, in order that we might judge of their merit; and not a paraphrase which may or may not truly represent the facts of the case. I do not speak without a certain knowledge of what has been said on the subject of the Irish famine. I am quite well aware that many persons, looking at the Irish famine and its results as a whole, feel satisfied that it has resulted in good; but I never knew a man to gloat over it. No doubt Providence does overrule apparent evils for good; and no doubt

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in many districts the Irish famine has resulted in good to many people, and in a large amount of physical comfort to the people that were left; but I apprehend that neither Lord Beaconsfield nor any other public man would ever go the length of saying what he last night was represented to have said. Then there was this point raised—and, whether it be true or not, I may be allowed to refer to it. I speak of the deplorable position in which the honorable gentleman opposite depicted the Irish population at the time of the famine. He said, for instance, that those poor wretches were ground down by the aristocracy, who wrung the last penny from them, and charged them even as much as £10 an acre for rent. Now, I happen to know what I am about to say on this matter, for I lived amongst those people. I resided amongst them at the time referred to—that is to say, in the autumn of 1846 and the spring of 1847. I know what the Premier alluded to when he referred to £10 a year rent; and let me tell the House how far that is true, and how far it does not represent the facts. Landlords in Ireland never got £10 per acre as rent for their land; but under a system of small tenures a man could get four or five or six acres of land; and a man having twenty acres was considered a well-to-do farmer. There grew up a large proportion of the population which had no land at all. Now, there being no manufactures in the country worth talking about, these people were driven to very great straits in order to find subsistence. There was no employment for them all the year round, and when they could get employment it was at a very low rate of wages. The way in which they managed to make ends meet was this: Under what was called the con-acre system they rented a quarter of an acre or perhaps a whole acre of land. They manured it and planted it with potatoes, upon which they subsisted. At the end of the year they went upon a fresh piece of land, which they again manured, and out of which they got a small crop of potatoes. By this means they were able to subsist with the wages they earned during the rest of the year. The landlords and the aristocracy of Ireland had nothing to do with that system. During the whole of my lifetime they had set their faces resolutely to get rid of it; and that fact formed one ground of objection to the landlord. I may say that I did my best to get the Irish Land Bill passed, and I have no reason to regret any action I took upon that occasion. We must do justice to those men even in our hostility. I think it was an unjust thing, to the party represented by Lord Beaconsfield, to that nobleman, and to all concerned, to make the statements that were made in the House last night; and I did not wish to allow them to pass without some trifling challenge. Well, now, there are some few points in reference to the general policy of the Government upon which I differ from them, and upon which I will ground my opposition and the vote that I intend to give upon this occasion. I take first of all the question of immigration. And here perhaps I may be allowed to say that the honorable gentleman who proposed the adoption of the Address in Reply

seemed not to have known that the Government have practically stopped free immigration. He spoke in strong terms in favour of nominated immigration, and I think he said nothing in reference to it that is not strictly true. In my own district there is a very large population of men holding each from forty to a hundred acres of bush land. These men came as free immigrants. They were day-labourers at Home, and most of them lived in poor circumstances. They applied for and got their pieces of land, and they are gradually becoming independent men. The advantage of the nominated system is this: It brings just the class of people who have already shown that they can hold their footing in the country; it brings just the class of men who are likely to be sober, honest, and industrious; and therefore it seems to me that if you are to have immigration it ought to be the bounden duty of the Government to encourage that class of men to come to this country. But there is another point that you have to take into account. When a free immigrant comes into the country you have to take charge of him—you have to see that he gets work, and that he does not starve. You send him to the Immigration Barracks, where he remains ten days, a fortnight, or even longer; but in the case of nominated immigrants you have no such trouble. They have their relatives and friends to look after them, and to obtain employment for them. Now, the system of free immigration has been practically put an end to. An announcement appears in the *New Zealand Gazette*, No. 88, of 24th August. I saw copies of this announcement in Taranaki, where it is being acted upon. The notification is signed by Mr. Gisborne, and the first clause is to this effect: "The sum of five pounds will be required to be paid in cash, in advance, for each male adult, whether married or single, at the time of making the nomination." That has put a stop to free immigration altogether in my district, and in almost all the districts. There was a statement made by the Prime Minister in reference to immigration generally—to free immigration. He first of all tells us that the bringing-out of free immigrants is at the expense of the working-men—that the result is the lowering of wages—and then he says this is cruel. Now, in the first place I am inclined to dispute the statement that it is at the expense of the working-men that free immigration takes place; and I deny *in toto* the statement that immigration, in the circumstances in which New Zealand is placed, could by any possibility lower wages. I take my stand, Sir, upon this fact: I say that it is an ascertained fact that in all free countries where land is plentiful and cheap, and population scarce, immigration, instead of having a tendency to lower wages, has an invariable tendency to raise them.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Hear, hear.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I am glad those gentlemen on the Ministerial benches say "Hear, hear," to this. It shows that we are in accord upon that important point, and out of accord with the views taken up by the head of the Government. I need not argue that question, as my friends opposite agree with me. I stated it as a fact in

my candidature; and I was answered by the oldest men in the place—by men who came out to Taranaki in the first ship—that it was an unmistakable fact that wages had risen with an increase of immigrants. How am I to place confidence in a Government whose head tells me what is utterly incredible to me, and who not only holds that view, but actually puts it in practice in the way I have indicated? He said in this House last session that a stop would be put to free immigration, and, in the way I have indicated, he has already put a stop to it. I can place no confidence in a Government whose chief member cannot tell me whether he is a Free-trader or not. I know no Liberal at Home, I know of no Liberal here, who has any doubt upon that point. Here is what Mr. Gladstone says in the last number that reached this country of the *Nineteenth Century*:—

"The legislation by which freedom of trade was established among us cost the nation many years—perhaps not less than fifteen or twenty—of its legislative life. From 1840 to 1860 it was the one absorbing subject of parliamentary action. It tore to pieces the political parties of the country; it made and unmade the fortunes of those by whom they were led, or who knew how to turn political vicissitudes to account. For this heavy price we received in return a system under which, and in great part by means of which, our trade with the world has been multiplied fourfold; our capital has been enormously augmented, so that the penny of income-tax, which was in 1842 worth some £700,000, is now, in round numbers, of the value of two millions. And, what is better than all this, the incomes of labouring-men of all classes have been increased by an amount which may be moderately estimated at 30 per cent. on the average, while their hours of work have in most or many cases been decreased, and a portion of their time rescued from sheer bondage to the immediate necessities of livelihood."

And then he goes on to denounce the Government for having, even by implication, coincided with the view expressed by one of their followers, who granted, or proposed to grant, a Committee to inquire whether the agricultural distress arose, or did not arise, from free-trade. And yet it is proposed, by this Address which this House is going to make, that a Committee should, here in this country, judge as to the mode of promoting manufactures and so on. Why, Sir, the very mention of such a thing shows that there is no liberality in those who propose it. Is it an open question amongst Liberals to go into the question of protection? I say, No. The very fact that a man does not know his own mind—that he turns one side of his face towards the Free-trader and the other side of his face towards the Protectionist—shows that he is not really a Liberal; and a Ministry with an illiberal, a really Tory head, cannot be a Liberal Ministry. Well, then, Sir, we are asked to sustain the Government on the ground of its great success in the Native policy. I am not going into the question of the Thames disturbance; I will simply ask the gentleman who tried to explain the matter whether the

Native Minister has been successful in his efforts. Has he secured peace? Of course the statement cannot be accepted which has been made, that this is merely a thing between a few Natives. The shooting of a man in Government employment cannot be set down, as is stated in the Address, as an intertribal dispute. Why should they shoot a Government officer because of disputes amongst themselves? It is utterly incredible. It is a dispute with the Government or it is nothing. The Government sent men to survey a certain piece of land, and they are shot? What does that mean? Surely it means not an intertribal dispute;—that may have been at the bottom of it originally—but it means at the present moment a dispute with the Government, or the authorities who sent the surveyors there. There is no getting out of that. I am not going into the old question whether Native affairs were managed well by this or by that man. I only say that when the present Government came into power two years ago we had no troubles with the Natives. And let us review the circumstances in that district where I know the facts better than I know them elsewhere. Nearly three years ago I happened to be in the Patea District, and I there saw the officer in charge of the Native Department. He had just finished a very complicated, a very tedious arrangement with the Natives with regard to the lands on this side of the Waingongoro River, and he told me that as soon as the payments were completed he intended to go to the other side of the river, and he was quite sanguine that upon that other side he would have no more trouble than he had on this side. Well, he made his arrangements to proceed. A new Government came into office; and what does this Government do? It says, "Stop that, until we look into it." What does that mean? A Government which professes to be the special friend of the Maori comes into office, and the first act that it does is to tell the officer in charge, "Don't do that particular duty, until we see whether it should be done or not." What was the natural inference to the Maori mind? Was it not this: "Our friends are now in office; our friends are determined to stop this taking of land from us. We have had warning for twelve months that the surveyors would come, and, now that the time has come, the Government has stopped it: we have friends in office;" and I can imagine the disappointment of the Natives when, twelve months afterwards, surveyors are put on the Plains for the purpose of taking the land from them which Government held out was to be theirs. It was perfectly natural that disturbances should arise. What precautions were taken for a possible settlement of the question after the Government had determined to go on with the survey? Was any precaution taken to protect the surveyors? None whatever. It was treated as an ordinary matter. Well, I cannot go further into this question of surveying, unless I go rather forward to the point when the surveyors were turned off. Then, what took place? There was an immediate sputter. They said, "Oh! we will put the land in the market;" and they advertised it by telegraph all over the Australian Colonies and New Zealand

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that, within a couple of months—I think in the month of May—the lands would be sold. I remember some people said, "Are they mad?" Others said, "Well, you see they are determined to carry it through." This determination to carry it through resulted in another set of telegrams countermanding the sale. Were the Natives likely to be conciliated by the apparent retrogression of the Government? No. No savage, no civilized, men would take this view of it. Well, after they had withdrawn their advertisements, nothing whatever was done until the Natives, emboldened no doubt by impunity—for impunity does embolden men, though even savages—what did they do? They came upon the lands of peaceable settlers, and ploughed them up. I see in this document that they are waiting patiently for the operation of the law. When they began to plough did they think of our laws? Are they thinking of our laws now? It is a notorious fact that Te Whiti told the honorable gentleman, when he went to Parihaka, that he did not regard him or his laws. Our laws are nothing to the Maoris. They despise the laws, and say you must submit to their laws. But here we are told, "No further development has taken place of the fanatical movement on the West Coast, and the tribes concerned appear to be quietly awaiting the action of the Parliament and of the ordinary Courts of law." Why, Sir, they are doing nothing of the kind. They are not waiting for the ordinary course of law. They do not care twopence about your law, or how it operates. Then the Speech says, "Steps are being taken for the holding of a full inquiry into the existence and extent of the alleged unfulfilled promises in regard to lands." Why, Sir, I apprehend that the Government have already satisfied themselves that there are hardly any unfulfilled promises.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—No, no.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I believe that is the fact.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—No, no.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I think other people are perfectly satisfied, on precisely the same information. The promises consist of two. The first to William King—the main promise, and the largest amount. He has never been out of possession of the land. He has held possession of it from the day he was told he might have it until to-day. Then there was another promise—that given to the Oakura Natives, who began this ploughing. What was it? A promise of some 22,000 acres near Stoney River—given to them on condition that their conduct would be good. Well, who holds possession of that land now? Are we surveying it, and cutting it up? No; it is in the hands of the Natives at this moment, and has been all through from the very time they were told that they might have it. What are the promises? Something has been said about Crown grants, and that they have not been given to the Natives. And how stands the fact? That hardly any Native will take up a Crown grant. The Native Office at New Plymouth is blocked up with Crown grants, and the Natives refuse to take them, for two reasons: first, because there is a

fee to be paid; and, secondly, because many think the proceeds will go to the publichouse.

The hour of half-past five having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven p.m.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I have already referred to the immigration policy, and endeavoured to point out the difference in that particular between myself and my friends and the Government as I understood it; but I understand since, by expressions of opinion from the Treasury benches, that I ought only to have referred to some members of the Ministry, although the policy of the Premier has been actually carried out in practice. I have also referred to the question of free-trade, and shown what was the latest expression of opinion of Mr. Gladstone which has reached us, an expression of opinion by a man who, above all others in British-speaking communities, expresses the views of the Liberal party upon the subject of free-trade, and I pointed out that there was no uncertain sound in his utterances. That gentleman showed no two-facedness about it—hinting that, if one party in the country were in favour of free-trade, he might possibly be in favour of it, or that, if a larger party were in favour of the other side of the question, he might possibly take up that particular side. Mr. Gladstone had one opinion and one expression of opinion for all. But a small quotation, which perhaps I might make, would represent the position of the Government upon the point:—

No! never say nothin' without you're compelled to;
And then don't say nothin' that you can be held to;
Nor don't leave no friction-ideas layin' loose
For the ignorant to put to incendiary use.

That is the position of the occupants of the Treasury benches; but it is not the position taken up by the Liberal party, and therefore I do not believe that, in this matter, the occupants of the Treasury benches represent the Liberal party. I then went on to the question of Native affairs, and I was in the midst of the expression of my opinion when the adjournment took place. I referred to the position we were in two years ago. I pointed out that the action of the Government in stopping the surveys upon the plains had a markedly injurious influence upon the Native mind—that this was the natural sequence of their action—and pointed out that their action in that matter, coupled with the position they have assumed as protectors of the Natives, had given the Natives a foolish and wrongful idea of their position in regard to the whole matter of the confiscated lands—that the position taken up by the Ministry encouraged hopes on the part of the Natives; and that the consequence was that, when disappointment stared them in the face, they turned the surveyors off the land. I referred to the fact that, owing to certain counsel in the Government, a hurried sale was determined upon—I think it was in the month of May the sale was to take place—and here I will point out what I forgot to mention before, that,

when the Land Board of Taranaki was communicated with, the members were told to put a fixed price upon the land—that is, a price fixed by the Government—an act contrary to all precedent, contrary to the law, I believe. And what was that price? Why, notoriously the land that it was proposed to put into the market would fetch in ordinary times not less than £10 or £12 per acre. It was worth that in the market. Lands worse situated, and of worse quality, were selling at a higher price; and what was the price the Government directed the Land Board to sell the land at? Why, £5 per acre. What did that mean? It meant that there was danger to the buyer. Was that the policy the seller of an article ought to pursue? You were like a merchant in the market who had land for sale, but you were desirous of selling the land at half its value.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, oh.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I know what I am saying to be the truth. Honorable members need not say, "Oh, oh." If any gentleman can reply to me he will have the opportunity to do so. Having taken this false step, the Government soon after—under wiser auspices; I do not know from what source derived—as hastily took the land out of the market. The telegraph was set in motion once more, and the advertisements were withdrawn from the Australian and New Zealand newspapers. Clearly the effect must necessarily have been upon the Native mind what it actually was—a feeling that the Government did not know its own resolves, did not know what steps to take, did not know its mind; while the Natives had a mind of their own, and took the bull by the horns, for, instead of the Government going on to the land of the Natives, the Natives came on to ours. I have pointed out, so far, the position of affairs; but how did the Government act when the Natives came to plough our land? I think that, in the whole course of administration, there has never been anything so vacillating as the conduct of the Ministry from that time to the present. There is a whisper going round the lobbies, I see that it even finds expression in the papers, and comes from the Ministerial members and their friends, that there is some object on the part of the people of Taranaki in keeping up an agitation about the Native difficulty—they are to get some wonderful advantage from it, we are told. Well, I have a word to say about that, but in the meantime I will try to pursue the historic course of the Government in the matter. I have said their conduct was vacillating. We had a visit from two members of the Ministry and a great personage whose name I might not be in order in mentioning: at any rate, we had the highest personages in the land visiting us. The danger was palpable. The opinion of men who knew what danger was, and men not afraid to meet danger, was clear and distinct. These gentlemen had before them the history of the colony. They knew that a single drop of blood shed meant a war extending throughout the whole of the Maori districts of the North Island; and, with all this before them, what action did the Ministry take? They waited, day by day, not to announce their own views, but to find out what this one or that one would do.

Their whole effort was to throw the initiative on the settlers of the district. I remember what went on between the Premier and a large deputation from the settlers, an affair in which I took very little part, though I had been in the chair at the meeting which sent the deputation to the Premier. I took little part in it, because, being comparatively a stranger, I wished men of more experience to speak; but, after listening to both sides for a time, I could not restrain myself from saying to the Premier words to this effect: "The danger does not lie merely in the fact that the Natives are ploughing our land, or that the Natives will offer violence. We should know perfectly well how to prepare for that, and would prepare for that; but the danger lies in this: that the Natives may go upon the land of some man less cool and collected than the Prime Minister—a man with more blood in his veins, or more passion at his heart—and that man might be betrayed into an act which in his cooler moments he might regret, but which uncontrolled passion might force him into; and what would be the effect? Why, that the whole country would be plunged into a war." I therefore urged that a sufficient physical force should immediately be sent into the district, so that the settlers might at once feel that they were safe in their houses. I did not speak for the people of New Plymouth, but for the residents of the out-districts—the men whose homes and families were in danger. Well, what was the reply? Something to this effect: "I have listened to what the speaker has said. From his position as Chairman of the county he ought to be listened to; but I think his speech was imprudent, and I do not see the danger he sees—that he thinks he sees." That was the course pursued. I was told in another interview—the first interview was on Saturday; this was on Monday—that men would hesitate before putting their necks into a noose—that is to say, that the settlers would hesitate before they took steps to resist the injuries put upon them. Things went on in this way till the settlers could stand it no longer, and turned the Natives off by force. At Hawera, at the other end of the district, they simply said to the Government, "If you do not put them off, we will give them till twelve o'clock to-morrow; and then we will turn them off." No answer was given, and the settlers themselves proceeded, at twelve o'clock next day, to turn these men off. I do not justify that action, but I say it was natural. It may have been unadvisable, but certainly it was natural. Supposing a shot had been fired on that occasion, what would have followed? Would not the whole of the Island have been at once in a blaze? Then, and not till then, the Government took action. They ordered the Constabulary to remove these men, but they did not do so until the settlers themselves had taken the initiative. And what happened at my end of the district? The ploughers, having given up ploughing for a season, resumed it at Oakura and all over the district between that and the White Cliffs. Mr. Kelly, a member of this House, viewing with alarm the course of proceedings, and knowing that the settlers were determined at once to eject, at what-

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ever cost, these intruders, telegraphed to the Government to this effect: "If you do not take the initiative, the settlers will take the whole thing out of your hands." Then came a tardy response, "Let the Constabulary remove the intruders." I ask, is that conduct worthy of a Government? Was there ever a Government that was worthy of the name that would have allowed its citizens to take the initiative in a case of this kind before it had the courage to perform its duty? I say the Government, in this respect, deserves reprobation both by this House and by the country. It has been said—and I believe it has been repeated within the last day or two by one member of the Government—in relation to a claim that has been made, that the settlers at Taranaki have been well paid by the disturbance, even as things stand. Why, Sir, is it to be said that the utter want of confidence amongst us, the utter impossibility of making a bargain even for the most trifling amount, is well repaid by such profits as may be obtained by feeding a couple of hundred men? Was there ever anything so monstrous as that? What is it to me, living in the bush? What is that to my fellow-settlers owning some forty or fifty acres of land, or living on some ten or twelve acres of clearing in the heart of the bush? What fat contracts have we got, or what fat contracts are we likely to get? Is drilling three days a week—is having to leave our work, and travel ten or twelve miles over roads where the mud lies so thick that it is up to your horse's girths if you ride, and above your knees if you walk, repaid for by provisioning a couple of hundred men? The thing is monstrous and absurd, on the face of it. Will it pay me to get a couple of pounds per head extra for my oxen, if my wife is shot and my children murdered? The thing is so monstrous that no words are strong enough to express our reprobation of it. Then, how is it proposed to settle the matter? I apprehend we know just as much from the newspapers as we are likely to get from the Government. When the Government were asked—last year, I think—to lay on the table of the House official intelligence of their interviews with Rewi, and their celebrated confabulations with Tawhiao, what did they give? They laid on the table a most marvellous production of newspaper clippings, a copy of which reached me at Taranaki, and which I had an opportunity of perusing. But I think we are just as capable ourselves as are the Government of making those newspaper clippings, and can get just as much information in that way as the Government are likely to give us. As far as I can make out, they have no policy for the future. We, the people of the district, have a policy. It may be a mistaken one, but at any rate it is a policy on which we are all united. It is a policy of peace, too, and not of war. It is a policy for physical changes in the aspect of the country. Our policy is to make roads through the disaffected district, acquire the land, sell it, and settle it with Europeans. In the Inglewood District we are not afraid of the Maoris; and why? Because every man of us is armed—badly, I know, but still armed—and every man is determined that no hostile Maori

shall come into the district. You might have the same thing in the disturbed district if you had only the courage to spend a sufficient sum—and it need only be a small sum—in making roads. Perhaps it will be said that it would be spending money amongst us. As far as I am concerned, I should not reap a penny benefit from it, except in the indirect way of having peace established. Separated by two days' journey from that district, such expenditure would in no sense or way be one in which the Taranaki settlers of my constituency would be personally interested, except in the sense in which all the people of the colony would be interested—the establishment of peace. Our policy is as distinct from the no-policy of the Government as possible. Our road-making policy would be preliminary to the policy of settlement. And here, again, when we talk of a policy of settlement we are at issue once more with the Prime Minister. He has put it forth that it would be an excellent plan to place the sons of men from the South Island on the land as military settlers. I and, I think, my constituents will join issue with the honorable gentleman on that point. We say that military settlers have never succeeded in New Zealand. We have them all round us in Taranaki; and, of all the military settlements established there, not one has succeeded. I go even further, and say that, looking to the experience of the whole world, I know of no military settlement that has succeeded. I myself come from a country where military settlements have been established, and I should like to know what they have done for Ireland during the last three hundred years. I should like to know how they have advanced the interests of that country. But I look at the question not only from an historical point of view, but in view of the actual facts of what has taken place in Taranaki; and I view with jealousy any attempt to establish further military settlements there. The policy of the colony, I am sure, ought not to be the establishment of military settlements, but making roads and settling the land on precisely the same principle as has been adopted in regard to settlements lately formed in other parts of the country. Sell the land to the highest bidder, and out of the proceeds give protection to your settlers. This protection would be easy if you follow out the first part of the programme—that of making roads—and then along those roads establish settlements. I have propounded a policy for the consideration of the Government which we in my district believe to be a good one; but I have no hope that those honorable gentlemen will follow it out, and therefore I cannot in my conscience give them my support. Some hard things have from time to time been said of the Native Minister, but I have no ill word to say against him; and I should be very sorry if any remark of mine should be taken as personal either with regard to him or to any other member of the Ministry, for both he and they have been most civil to me. I believe they are, according to their light, doing their duty; but I believe that the light that is within them is for the greater part darkness. There is another matter which I have omitted to mention, and which has been upon my

mind and upon the minds of all the people I represent. In speaking about it, I think I may honestly say I represent the feelings of ninety-nine out of every hundred of the freeholders of the Grey and Bell District. There have been from time to time hints thrown out that we in that district are interested to a large extent in agitating the Natives in order to get their land. If any lawyer thinks he can make a fortune out of the titles to land in Taranaki, I am afraid he will find he has made a great mistake. For myself, I may say I never had, and probably never shall have, an acre of Native land. The feeling of the people there in regard to the Native lands is, that you should make ample reserves for the Natives. I have already referred to two large tracts—aggregating something like sixty-five thousand acres of the very richest land in the island—granted to two tribes. No man in my district in any way grudges them that. And, more than that, there are men like Honi Pihama and others, who, though at one time at war with us, have since then been sincere in their friendship; and we say, "Reward them better than you have ever rewarded Natives before." With regard to our enemies—those who have given us trouble—we say the same thing. Give them more than they require; give them ample reserves, and do it at once. Do not let the thing hang over. But above all things we ask you to individualize the land. Some will lease it; some will sell it: make every provision that you can in order that they may be honestly dealt with both in leasing and selling. Let it be done by the Government if you like, or by public auction if you think it better. We have no objection. Let the money be funded if you will, so that they may not spend it all in drink. Remember that one of the difficulties we have in making the Natives take up titles is, that they fear, if they do take them up, all the money will get into the hands of the grog-sellers. Therefore we say, Make ample provision against a difficulty of that kind. When you have done all that, you will have abundance of land for sale, which will be so enhanced in value by the making of roads that there will be more than enough for the making of these roads in the increased price of the land. Passing from the Natives, perhaps I may be allowed to say one or two words in reference to the three principal points in what is called the Liberal programme. I have already said that from early youth until now I have advocated Liberalism, and not merely a milk-and-water Liberalism, but Radicalism; and therefore I speak in every sense as a Liberal. With regard to the extension of the franchise, my position is a very simple one. I should say that upon all points I feel absolutely free. My constituents have made no terms with me. They took me with whatever faults and failings I had, and with the opinions that I was known to possess. They asked me no questions about them. They took it for granted that I would act honestly; and I do not come here as their delegate, but as their representative. With regard to the franchise, I have this to say: In my own district I find that about six hundred freeholders are not on the roll at the present

moment, owing partly to their own carelessness and to a very large extent to the want of facility in the law, and also, I may say, to this fact: that you have two laws which contradict each other, or, rather, one which was meant to supplement the other, but does not. For instance, in the Electoral Act there are provisions by which a man is required to give various particulars with regard to his holding, his residence, and so on. But in another Act—I think the Act of 1875—there is a clause which provides that the Clerk of a Road Board is to send in, on or before the 31st March, the names of all persons who have paid rates previous to that date. Well, acting under the provisions of this Act, names have been sent to the proper authority, but the lists have been thrown into the waste-paper basket because they did not give the particulars required by the other Act. The consequence is, that in my district not less than six hundred freeholders were disqualified from voting at the last election. I may state that in one road near my house—I think the road to which my farm extends—out of twenty-seven freeholders only three were upon the roll. That will show how, partly by the operation or non-operation of the law, and partly by the carelessness of the people themselves, numbers are kept off the register; and the 65,000 serfs that have been so much talked about would, I think, vanish into thin air if a proper investigation were made all over the colony, such as I have made in my district. If those persons I have mentioned were put on the register, I venture to say there would not be two dozen men over twenty-one years of age in the whole of the Grey and Bell District who would be placed on the register by manhood suffrage. I say that advisedly, after consultation with those persons in the constituency who know most about it. But if the number were ten times two dozen it would not frighten me. I say distinctly and clearly, Put them on. And I say that, if a Bill—an honest Bill—for I regard the measure of the session before last as one which was never meant to be passed—if an honest Bill be brought forward with a real intention of being passed, it shall have my cordial support. But I will give my consent to no Bill that will swamp the European constituencies by Maori votes. My constituency, like many others in the North Island, would be easily swamped under the Bill that was introduced by the Premier; and in this way: We have between Waitara and Urenui some twelve thousand or fourteen thousand acres of magnificent land. It is entirely in the hands of the Natives, and it is held in common. Its owners are scattered all over the two Islands. An immense number of them do not reside in the district at all. With an unscrupulous—I was going to say Native Minister—but with an unscrupulous servant of the Native Office hundreds and hundreds of names could at any time be placed upon the roll; and under the secret system of the Native Office the men could be brought from time to time, as occasion required, to swamp the genuine electors at an election. I will therefore oppose any measure which will give that kind of dual voting. So long as the Natives fulfil

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the conditions of citizenship which Europeans have to fulfil—if they pay taxes as we pay them—then I have no objection at all to the Natives standing exactly on an equality with myself; but I altogether object to men who pay no taxes, except the merest trifle indirectly, who do not live in the district, who have no special interests, who have not a foot of land they can say is their own individually—I say I object to these men being brought from time to time, at the will of any man, or any underling of any man, to swamp the genuine settlers at an election. To a fair and honest franchise I offer no opposition. Nay, I go further than that. I do not see why it should stop at manhood suffrage. For thirty years I have advocated female suffrage, and I see no reason why it should not be introduced here. But that is not the question of the moment. When the time comes, when younger men take it up, as I hope they will do, it will have my support. In the meantime I will give my support to any honest and well-considered measure for universal suffrage in the old-fashioned sense. Then, with regard to the redistribution of seats. There again my course is perfectly clear. Population I believe ought to be the main basis: there is no question in my mind about that. It ought to be the main basis, but I do not believe it ought to be the only one. And here I want to free myself altogether from an argument which I have seen reported in *Hansard* as having been made use of in this House, and which I know is a very common one amongst my Tory friends. It is this: that in addition to population you must look at property. Now, Sir, in looking at population, I, in the main, do look at property, because I believe that property and population, as a rule, go together—that is to say, that the valuation of, say, the City of Wellington, with its 20,000 or so inhabitants, will probably be about the same as the valuation in a larger district with the same amount of population. The value may even be more, for, owing to exceptional circumstances, the valuation of a town increases out of all ratio to the population. But I do not go by that at all. I will not look at property. I say it is sufficiently recognized in the mere fact of the larger population. But I think that the Bill should deal with this matter itself—that its provisions should be directly introduced in this House, and not be worked out by a machinery outside. And I say so upon this ground: that, in dealing with this matter, you want the advice and assistance of all concerned—and you cannot get that advice and assistance unless you have them to give you information—in this regard, which I have not seen mentioned in the speeches of honorable gentlemen during the last Parliament, but which I throw out for the consideration of those who may have to bring in a Bill on the subject. It is this: It seems to me that there is no antagonism, and never can be any real antagonism, between town and country. The interests are identical. In whatever aspect you put them, to any reasonable man the two interests are identical. But, Sir, they are not always considered to be identical. Apart from mere interest there is a sentiment and an appa-

opposition of feeling. This has been shown in n case at the last election, and, if honorable men will permit me to say a word about a ratively private matter, I will illustrate the n I wish the House to see. During the n the cry against me was that I was op- to the harbour of New Plymouth. Well, indly did make a journey to Wellington two go, when Parliament was sitting, and I saw l honorable gentlemen, and thought I had ded them—as they said they were per- l—to take my view of the subject. How- hey afterwards changed their minds—I did ame them for it—and, instead of opposing ill that was then before Parliament, they for it, and the measure was passed, and we to get a harbour. It will naturally be hat the people of New Plymouth, who very earnest about getting the harbour, me very little good-will. Now, I was for their interests, as I thought and be- ; but they did not think so. What was the uence? Almost to a man they opposed the election. They had a large number of —a couple of hundred—in the town, and I t think I am betraying the secrets of the box when I say that I got precious few of votes. In the country districts the num- ood thus: 90 for me, 2 for my opponent; me, 16 for my opponent. It was just the e, however, in the town. Now, the interests e two places were entirely identical, but was a misapprehension as to their true in- s in one place or the other—I am not pre- to say which. Although their interests absolutely identical, their sentiments and gs were adverse. That will, I hope, illus- in a sufficiently explicit way what I mean. ave feelings that are not in common, and, ore, if you join them forcibly in the bonds, r say, of wedlock, they will be pulling against other. Therefore, in forming the new con- ncies I believe the only true and honest plan, he only effective plan in the end, will be to ler the feelings of constituencies—the natural es of gravity, as it were, of the various consti- ies; and, whether there be a thousand more or a thousand more there, let them be joined e Nature has joined them and where sentiment joined them. Well, Sir, with that qualifi- n I will go in for a free redistribution of seats. ievie that every one of the gentlemen with a I am acting will do the same. Then we to the subject of triennial Parliaments. , again, I think we may have a perfectly and open understanding. It has been said we are not sincere. The honorable member uckland City East said he could not believe we would sincerely carry out the views ex- ed by the honorable member for Selwyn, see we could not be thought to be in earnest e point. I have no hesitation in saying that r person I have spoken to on this side of the se has expressed his intention of voting for honest Triennial Bill. My own feeling is not warm one way or the other. I feel about as I feel about many other indifferent ques- ; and my constituents do not care a rap

about it. They told me so in plain words. I am free to vote as I think proper, and they will be satisfied; therefore I say, in a free and independent way, that I am perfectly prepared to vote for triennial Parliaments. I have dealt with three points upon which it has been said that what is called the Liberal party differs from ours, which I suppose I must call the Constitutional party. The word "constitutional" is a very good one, but it has always been associated in my mind with such an abominable perversion of its meaning that I do not like the name. I do not intend to call myself that. I am a Radical. Then let us see how we stand with regard to the Liberal party. The Liberal party with which I have always been connected was a very peculiar one. It was frequently in a minority. I have been used to being in minorities, but I have always seen my minorities change into majorities. Well, Sir, what was the general principle—the *raison d'être*—of the Liberal party at Home. Its characteristic was to bring people together—to make one nation out of two or three—to abolish privileges, not by bringing men down, or robbing them of what they had acquired, but by taking away artificial barriers, and enabling men to rise to any position to which Nature would allow them to rise. That was the function of the Liberal party ever since there was a Liberal party in Great Britain. Let us take the case of the agitation to abolish the corn laws. That carries us back to the time when those of us who are beginning to get grey hairs were young. Well, what did we say to those who supported the old institutions, the old law—which, after all, was not a very old one, for it did not come to us from the mists of antiquity? What was one of the arguments used then? "We impoverish no man; we enrich many. We take away no real privilege; but we bring men into the enjoyment of privileges. We take away no man's acre—we take no man's land; but we refuse any longer to support by artificial buttresses a system which ought to have come to the ground long ago." That was the position taken up on that question. Then, let us come to the Irish Church. When, in 1868, we agitated the country on that question—and I took an active part in the agitation in my own district—did we go about as robbers, robbing men of their own? No. We said, "You, as a Church, will be benefited by it. What we are doing is for your good. We are taking nothing from you to which you are entitled; we only ask you to do as men before you have done. We ask you to walk alone, that you may enjoy the feeling of your own strength." And that we succeeded, take this little anecdote as a proof. A few years after the passage of the Act, being in Belfast, and having nothing to do on a particular day, I entered a railway-carriage to go to a part of the country I had not seen, and in the carriage I saw a lady and a sick boy. I was attracted to them because they had been fellow-passengers with me in a steamer the night before. The air was full of the Irish Church question, and in a very short time the lady introduced the subject. She said, "The Liberal party meant to destroy us, but God has turned their act to our

good." I said, "We worked for your good. We told you it would be for your good; and I am glad to hear from your testimony that it has been so." This was the wife of a dignitary of the Church in a cathedral town. Well, that is precisely the position the Liberal party has always occupied at Home. It has tried, not to pull down, not to do evil to anybody, but to do good to all. We started two centuries ago, or more. We started with the determination to do good to men, and we, the Liberal party of to-day, hold the principles of our fathers. We may have made mistakes—no doubt we have, from time to time—but that has been the great aim and object of the party. We have tried to level class distinctions; we have tried to make men look upon themselves as men; we have tried to make men look upon their brothers as men; and, to a large extent, though not to the full extent, we have succeeded. That is the Liberal party at Home. But what is the Liberal party here? Its special function is to denounce men if they hold land. Its special function seems to be to raise up artificial barriers where Nature and the law have made none. If there be artificial barriers here, why has no law been introduced for their abatement. I learned to-day, for the first time since I came here, that the law of entail is in existence in New Zealand. Why have Ministers not attempted to repeal that law? At Home the large estates are kept up by it. We of the Liberal party have fought against it; but we do not wish to cut down the large estates by artificial means. All that is desired by the Liberal party at Home is that Nature shall have its fair way, and that the possession of estates shall be as free as the possession of any other kind of property. Why has the Liberal party not endeavoured to prevent some of the evils which take place at Home? The fact is, the Liberal party here has not been in earnest in its Liberalism, or else its leaders do not know what Liberalism is. I should be sorry to impute motives to men, and I will therefore take the latter alternative, and say that if it be the function of the so-called Liberal party here to flatter the poor man and to denounce the rich, to flatter mobs and to denounce the educated, then the sooner the Liberal party is squelched the better, and a new Liberal party, built upon new lines, put in its place. What is the Liberal at Home? He has no more fear of facing the mob than he has of facing the aristocrats of the Upper House; but here every person that can pretend to be a working-man is flattered and cajoled as if he were an infant. There ought to be more respect for the working-man than this. Why, what am I? If I am seen at home, I am in rage, and work as hard as any of them. Then, what are the others? What are these men who are so much appealed to? I say this is mountebankism, and not Liberalism; and, until these men who are the leaders of the Liberal party come forward and try to lead these men to better and not to worse, I will not follow them. I happened to-day to see a few lines which very correctly represent the actions of these men. They are as follow:—

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In short, I do firmly believe
In humbug generally,
For it's a thing that I perceive
To hev a solid rally.

The humbug that has been carried on during the last elections seems to me to be very much of the kind described in these lines. There is a certain "rally" about it; but it is a value that will not stand for long. I will counsel those young men who have spoken from the opposite benches, not to desert their party, so-called—but, above all, not to desert their principles. I say to them, let them be able to stand in a minority, and hold their ground in a minority. Let them cleave fast to principles and let loose their hold of men of loose principles. I do not ask them to come to us. They do not know us sufficiently, and I do not know them. But I say this to them—and it is a thing I have never seen lose its value: Keep hold of your convictions. Do not be afraid of your enthusiasms even; and you may depend upon it that if you give full sway to enthusiasm, but under the guidance of right reason, you need not be afraid to face even that old age to which you have appealed.

Mr. MOSS. — Sir, I feel that it would be somewhat impertinent on my part as a member of only two sessions to speak as I would like to do of the manner in which the debate has been so far conducted, and, I may say, the decided improvement in tone which has been caused by the dissolution and the appearance among us of so many new members. At the same time, I desire to express that feeling, and a hope that nothing I shall say will in the slightest degree change the tone, although on many points I shall be bound to differ very materially indeed from many of those gentlemen who have spoken before me. I should like in the first instance to refer to the manner in which the debate was opened by the honorable member for Selwyn—the leader of the Opposition. Nothing could have exceeded the good taste, good temper, and courtesy with which the honorable member spoke. But it appears to me he must have felt that he had a very poor case indeed. The whole speech was just such a speech as we might have expected to hear, not from one contesting grave questions of policy on which the whole future of a young country depends, not from one who was fighting a Government endeavouring to carry out that policy, but rather from one who treated the subject more as if it were a question of displacing one Chairman of a County Council and electing another. We heard of the "Hinemoa," of a bridge here, of a clock there, and of a water-race somewhere else. No great questions of policy were touched upon, none of the real differences that exist between that side of the House and this were referred to; and upon that speech we are asked to give a vote that will displace a Government which I believe has been honestly struggling against great and immense difficulties during the last three years—struggling in a House in which it was in a minority—struggling against division in its own ranks,—but which has roused public opinion throughout New Zealand, and brought before the people of the country

great questions which, until that Government came forward, were not even mentioned. I was disappointed also with the speech of the honorable member for Cheviot, although I think the same excuse is to be made for that honorable member as I hope will be granted to me, that he, like myself, is to a great extent travelling over old ground. We spoke over and over again on this subject last session, and we now come somewhat stale to the question. The new members are able to throw more life and vigour into the debate, and clothe it with the flesh and blood which it deserves. Unless we deal with the larger questions involved in this contest, as well as with the mere questions of water-races, the "Hinemoa," Christchurch clock, and things of that kind, the debate will sink to the level to which, I am sorry to say, it sank last session. The speech of the honorable member for Cheviot suggested this thought to my mind, because he ridiculed every attempt to elevate the debate out of that rut as "celestial." The speech of the honorable member who opened the debate was "terrestrial," but anything that rises out of that groove is, according to the honorable member for Cheviot, celestial. I will attempt to go into some of these celestial questions. I will try to show that we have something more to think about on the present occasion than the mere administration of the Government, and I hope I shall be able to show good grounds for continuing that Government in office, despite errors of administration, for I am not at all prepared to defend everything that the Government have done. Despite those errors of administration, I hope I shall be able to adduce sufficient grounds why that Government ought to remain in office until it has had an honest chance of carrying out the policy which it has so long and, I believe, honestly enunciated, but which it has never yet had the power to bring down for fair consideration before the House. Before I go further, let me refer to the speech of the honorable member for Grey and Bell. In listening to him I felt that my sentiments and his own were so much in accord—that his sympathies and mine so thoroughly agreed—that it was astonishing he should be so earnest in his support of that side of the House, and that I should be equally earnest in my support of this. The only cause to which I can attribute the difference between us is, that the honorable member has not been twenty years in New Zealand, as I have been, and he has not been able to trace the history of the country and watch the struggles that have gone on. The honorable member has only been here a few years, and perhaps, therefore, is not able to see how little applicable English rules and precedents are to our condition. I am afraid, also, that the honorable member has suffered himself to be misled by newspaper reports, because he has not had an opportunity of hearing most of the things absolutely said in this House. Had he been here he would have found a very different condition of things. He would have found how little real debate there is in this House. He would have found the party with whom he is now working

scorning debate when they found themselves strong, and carrying everything with a very high hand. That is one reason why we on this side of the House are determined they shall not get into power again. Before the present Ministry came into power we used to see fifty men, who had scarcely listened to a word of debate, trooping in one after the other to record their votes in favour of the Ministry of the day; and debate became a farce. Something dropped from the honorable member which led me to think that he has misunderstood much that has been said on this side of the House. He referred to 65,000 serfs who were to be emancipated in New Zealand by the policy we are supporting. I do not know where that phrase came from. It must be a phrase coined by some newspaper.

HON. MEMBERS.—It is in *Hansard*.

MR. MOSS.—Is it in *Hansard*? Was it stated that there are serfs in New Zealand, or that there might be serfs here in future? That makes all the difference. I have heard it said that the policy we propose will avoid the creation of serfs in future; but certainly I have no recollection of anybody saying that there are serfs in New Zealand now. I mention this to show that the honorable member does not clearly understand us on this side of the House. I should think it an insult to any working-man in the colony to call him a serf. I maintain, however, that, but for the public opinion lately roused in New Zealand, some time hence we should have serfs here. I will undertake to prove it. I will show that the whole course of our policy here was tending towards that. Then, again, the honorable member spoke of the upset price of land on the Waimate Plains being lowered to £5, as if it were done by the Government to lower the value of the land in the public estimation. But that land was put up to auction; £5 was merely the upset price; and the probability is that it was lowered to excite larger competition. It is not as if £5 was the price at which the land should be bought. I think the honorable member will admit he was wrong in that point of the indictment he brought against the Government. With regard to the law of entail, this is the first time I have heard it stated that the law of entail exists in New Zealand. I do not think so. It is statute law in England, and a very old one, under which entails exist; and I doubt whether it applies to New Zealand. I do not know of any case in which it has been attempted to be brought into force. But I would call the special attention of the honorable member for Grey and Bell to what was done by the present Government the session before last. They brought down a Bill which placed real property in the same position as personal property, and provided that when an intestate estate was being administered the real property should be divided equally among the children.

MR. HALL.—That was done long ago.

MR. MOSS.—I have a distinct recollection that the Administration Bill was brought down the session before last.

MR. HALL.—It was a mere technical amendment.

MR. MOSS.—I know the Bill was brought

down; but I accept at once the statement of the honorable member. My honorable friend near me, who is a lawyer, knows better than I do, and he still says that I am right. It is admitted by the Opposition that the Bill introduced was an amending measure. At all events it was a step in the right direction. I know this, that, small as that reform may be considered, it is one which Mr. Bright has tried in vain for years to have carried out at Home. Another expression fell from my honorable friend the member for Grey and Bell. He spoke of us on this side of the House as flattering mobs, and said that was not true Liberalism. We hold this opinion—and I say that experience justifies us in holding it—that, if you take New Zealand from one end to the other, there is no such thing as a mob in it. We know of no mob in New Zealand. I only wish my honorable friend lived in a more populous place than Taranaki. I only wish he saw three thousand or four thousand people assembled together, as in the larger towns, conducting their business in an orderly manner, carrying on their proceedings in such a way as could not be surpassed anywhere, coming to a most clear and intelligent decision, and free from all rowdiness of any kind. Happily we have no mobs in New Zealand, and one of the main points in our liberal programme is, that we do not intend to have them. If education, fair treatment, a share—a full share—in the government of the country can avoid that greatest of calamities, the creation of mobs, then we shall not have laboured in vain in promoting this liberal policy. Then, again, we are told that we rail at those who own large estates, and that the people of England do not rail at the holders of large properties. I do not rail at persons who have large estates. I think it is exceedingly fortunate to have these estates; but I say that we are in great danger of these men not only having the estates, but being the ruling class in the country. It is to avoid this that we want to see legislation in the direction indicated in the Governor's Speech. We envy no man his property, and we desire to curtail no man's estate by unfair means; but we say, Keep your estates; rejoice in the wealth that you possess; rejoice in the increased influence which that wealth, properly used, will always give you—you have an immense advantage over those who have no wealth, in that respect; but do not claim one iota more voice in the government of the country than other men, with wives and families, who contribute largely to the general taxation of the country. We require that every man shall have an equal voice in the government of the country. That is the only safeguard from the evils which large estates have always brought about in other countries; which the honorable member for Grey and Bell, and all who choose to give a candid expression to their views, must admit. Are we to be told that we are premature in this? Let me refer to an extract from a paper showing what is the state of things in Cheviot County, represented by my honorable friend Mr. Saunders, and which is about equal in size to Middlesex. It is entirely comprised in three enormous freeholds, comprising

179,000 acres. In Waikato County there is one freehold of 80,000 acres. In Marlborough County there is one freehold of 89,000 acres, owned by two gentlemen both long absent from the colony, enjoying large revenues from this land, and contributing little or nothing to the taxation of the colony. In the same county there are ten other holdings, together comprising 220,000 acres of freehold and 64,000 acres of leasehold. In Amuri, eight freeholds comprise 248,000 acres; in Tūapeka, are one freehold of 70,000 acres and one of 20,640 acres; in Southland County, one freehold of 70,000 acres; and so on, showing ninety-six freeholds, containing two and a-half millions of acres; showing the tendency to accumulation of land in few hands, which honorable members on the other side, as well as on this, regard as a great evil if allowed to be the permanent condition of the country. There is a long list of these cases, but the aggregate result is, that there are about two millions and a-half of acres of land in the possession of a few people. Unless we take care, the inevitable result will be, that the holders of large estates will increase their estates, that they will acquire increased political influence, and that they will in the course of another hundred years be really the ruling class in this country. This has been the inevitable course of things in other countries. Let us go back twenty years in the history of New Zealand. What was the position then? We had self-governing bodies elected by the people. Those bodies administered the lands in the interests of the people, and passed the most liberal land laws that could be proposed. There was every desire to see the country settled. At the same time there was always passed by this House a Gold Fields Act, which traversed the liberal provisions of the provincial Land Act. The Provincial Governments were crippled by the claims made for compensation, and the liberal designs of Provincial Governments were destroyed. In the North we have seen the same influence brought to bear over and over again in the acquisition of large estates. Men have hired land from the Natives—land inalienable, which they could by law only lease for twenty-one years. Having so hired it, and got possession, the next step is to purchase from individual Natives the freehold of the land, of course at a very low price, because the transaction is an illegal one. Having obtained the freehold, the possessor comes to the Government of the day and says, "I want you to pass an Order in Council authorizing the Natives to sell this land." Has not that been done over and over again? A mere bogus sale is authorized, because the Natives have already sold it. The Order in Council is simply to cover an illegal act. I desire to show my honorable friend the member for Grey and Bell that, having witnessed all these things in the past, I have acquired an earnest desire not to see the whole power of the country thrown into the hands of any one class of men. I have seen the provincial institutions destroyed in a manner not creditable to those who took part in their destruction. I have seen them for twenty-five years deliberately undermined and sapped, privilege after privilege, and power after power taken from them, and every ad-

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vantage taken in this House to bring them into poverty and contempt. After all, they were abolished by an Act teeming with bribes—bribes to County Councils, bribes to local governing bodies, bribes to every public body in the country, paid from money which certainly belonged to the people, and not to the Government who presumed to give it. Supposing the Government had money available for these local bodies, I will defy any one to give a single reason why the Provincial Governments should not have had that money instead of the local bodies; but the Provincial Governments were carefully kept without a penny. This House fostered a feeling of jealousy also between the town and the country. The members representing country districts were encouraged to believe that their districts were being oppressed by the towns. These were the means by which the old state of things was upset, and which led to the state of things that now prevails. We have engendered by this course a feeling of wide distrust in this Assembly. I do not hesitate to say it; I have a perfect right to say it. We have here a body that arrogates to itself powers unknown to any other Legislature in any colony; because it has been the aim of those who have struggled to retain power in their hands to put this Assembly above the Constitution of the country. The old Constitution provided that representation should be strictly according to population. It also provided that we should have numerous bodies to distribute power, to distribute patronage; but we have seized the powers once wielded by those bodies, and we have assumed to ourselves the whole power, the whole patronage, and the whole revenue of the country. I say there is great danger to the country, unless there be legislation of such a kind that we in our turn shall be controlled by the people, and not control them. Any one who looks at the representation at this moment must see that it is unequal and unfair. For instance, my honorable friend the member for Cheviot represents one of the smallest constituencies in the country—a constituency of 1,700 people—and yet he has an equal voice in the legislation to those who represent thousands. There are numerous other cases of the same kind. That is the position of things that has grown up; and it is a position full of danger. I want to ask honorable members this question: Will any one show that there was the slightest sign of appreciation of this danger, or the slightest desire to face it, in the public interest, until the present Government came into office? No. We were treated to all kinds of schemes of local government; we were treated to all kinds of talk about constitutionalism; but, until the present Government came into office, until it raised public opinion upon this great and vital question, the silence of death prevailed. The Assembly was fast getting into its hands an unequal distribution of seats—an unfair distribution of the represented—and the whole power of the country. In rousing public attention to these growing evils, this Government have done good service, and made me one of their most ardent supporters. An honorable member asked why the Land Boards were not made elective. Under the old sys-

tem the Land Boards represented the provincial authorities, who, in their turn, were responsible to their Provincial Councils; and all their acts could be examined. But you destroyed all that: you destroyed the institutions that existed; you razed the whole fabric. And you cannot now make these and other Boards elective, because you cannot find or create the constituencies to elect them. I will now briefly refer to another of the charges alleged against the Government. I never heard any member of the Government—I have no recollection of hearing any member of the Government—or any member of this House, attribute to the people of Taranaki any of those motives which the honorable member for Grey and Bell believes have been attributed to them. They may have been attributed outside this House; but, so far as the Government and the members of this House are concerned, I have certainly never heard any other expression than that of admiration with regard to the conduct of the Taranaki people throughout the very serious difficulty in which, for some months past, they have been placed. I thoroughly appreciate the warmth of the honorable member's feelings when he speaks under the impression that his constituents had been traduced—

Colonel TRIMBLE.—It has been said within twenty-six hours of the present time.

Major ATKINSON.—And by a Minister of the Crown.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Name!

Mr. MOSS.—I think the honorable member must have heard some idle talk outside. I should like to ask the honorable member if he heard the Minister himself say it.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I heard the same Minister say it on a former occasion.

Mr. MOSS.—I am sure, if he said such a thing, he would not be supported by his colleagues or their supporters. Then, Sir, the honorable gentleman says that before the present Government came into power everything was peace. In saying that, however, the honorable member makes a great mistake. Why, it is only some four or five years since, within fifty or sixty miles of Auckland, the then Government was obliged to employ armed men in the construction of the Waikato Railway. So recently as 1875 there were murders in the Waikato—there were the Sullivan, Todd, and other murders. Can the honorable member call that a condition of peace? When the predecessors of the present Government were in office we were told, "Above all things, preserve the peace; because, if you do not, the whole finances of the country will be deranged, and all sorts of trouble and disaster will ensue." That was then the cry. Now honorable members ask for a spirited policy. I know I am perfectly correct in what I say of Auckland Province. As to Taranaki, I am not prepared to say what was the condition of things there, but I know that since this Government came into office matters have become very much more secure on the Waikato frontier. Meetings have been held with the Natives, and the veil has been lifted which previously obscured what was being done in that part of the country. We now

know that the people there are perfectly safe. We have not heard the slightest fear expressed by the settlers there whilst all this trouble has been in existence on the West Coast. I had occasion last session to mention that I was present at the great meeting at Te Kopua, which I heard described as a failure. I was present for nine or ten days, and to me it appeared one of the greatest successes ever achieved. It dissipated all fear of the Natives beyond the border so thoroughly that no one has raised the voice of alarm since. And it is upon that border that the greatest number of Natives are located. Again, I would like to remind honorable members that we do not stand alone among nations in dealing with the Natives in this respect. In the Indian Territory, in the United States, sixty-five thousand Indians are located, and, although here and there a Resident Commissioner is settled, no European is allowed to settle there—to buy land there; no European has been able to buy land there, except upon one condition—that he marries a native woman and becomes one of the tribe; and that is a rule that not many Europeans will conform to. You see that we are not the only people who are dealing with Natives in the manner that has been pointed out, when a powerful country like the United States allows a large portion of its territory to be isolated, and the native people to govern themselves. I will not trouble the House with many more remarks on the subject, because I feel I shall only be, to a certain extent, repeating what I said last session; and I feel therefore somewhat half-hearted in speaking on the matter; but I could not allow the opportunity to pass without explaining why two members who, I believe are thoroughly in accord in their political principles—the honorable member for Grey and Bell and myself—are not at this moment both found on this side of the House. I attribute it to my having had experience of the way in which affairs have been conducted in New Zealand which the honorable gentleman has not yet had. I believe that when the honorable member has been longer in the country, when he has thoroughly studied the history of the past, it will shake his faith in the party to which he seems wedded at the present time. We are now all Liberals in this country. The Opposition say they are Liberals: but their liberalism is of very recent date. This the honorable member for Grey and Bell will soon find. He will find that not long since it was the custom to deride public opinion in this House.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, oh!

Mr. MOSS.—I state what I know to be true. When great meetings were held to protest against the Abolition measure, not the slightest attention was paid to the opinions of those outside—they were told that they were the opinions of the mob. Not the slightest attention was paid to these opinions. And now we are all Liberals. To show what a sudden change must have come over them, I will refer to some specimens of the liberalism we had when the party opposite was in power. The first State prosecution—which I hope to be the last in this country—was instituted by their Government, and instituted in order to crush an individual.

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That was the way in which the late Government dealt with persons who opposed them: they crushed them, if they could, if they found that they were at all troublesome and there were no other means of silencing them. If the opinions of the late Government were liberal, why did they support the *Waka Maori*, in defiance of a vote of this House—for which they now profess so much respect—until it was brought up and the Government had to dispense £6,000 in paying for a libel? Was that the action of a Liberal party, who will not allow the smallest error on the part of the present Government? When we hear so much talk about the "*Hinemoa*," I would ask who purchased her, and, so far as I recollect, without any vote of the House? Who was it that entered into great railway contracts involving many thousands of pounds, and, after bringing a contractor into the country, had to make arrangements with him on account of the specifications not being ready? I refer to the Brogdens. Who did that? We hear of waste; we hear of extravagance; and we hear it from a party that for years supported a Government that admitted it had for its own purposes wasted one and a half millions of money. Has the present Government ever done anything to be compared with the acts of the Government that preceded it? I say, No. Again, we hear to-day of gross wrongs being done to the Civil Service of the country by putting over the heads of others men who have no claim to be so placed. Why, Sir, the whole of the offices are filled with men brought out from England by previous Governments—brought out from England because there were not men good enough in the colony, and that by members whom we now hear reproaching the Government for neglecting the interests of the Civil Service. Any honorable member could count on his fingers half a dozen instances of the appointments that I refer to. Again, we hear of newspapers being bribed by paltry advertisements. Why, Sir, the newspaper history of the colony is one record for years of the attempts of previous Governments to get the Press into their hands by means of forming companies—companies of all kinds, and means of all kinds used to effect that end. Why, in those days the Government of the country cared little what means they employed to obtain support, so long as they got it. I believe that more wrong was done by the late Government in five years—that there was more nepotism, more friends put into office, more wrong done to the Civil servants, and more wrong done to the country during those five years—than the present Government could be charged with for the next twenty years, if it remained in office. They tell us also that the policy they adopted was in the interests of the whole people. Take the public works policy. There is a policy in which millions of money have been borrowed, and enormous burdens placed on the people. How has that money been spent? Has it not been spent in increasing the value of the enormous properties held by a comparatively few people? When that borrowing was first agreed to, was it not one of the chief conditions that any deficiency in the payment of interest that might

be found on the working of the railways was to be charged to the districts through which the railways ran? But no sooner are the railways made than we find that burden, too, thrown on the people; and any man who dared to oppose this is denounced as a Communist. Then, again, look at the whole system of taxation of the country. We now find honorable members earnest and sincere Liberals on that side of the House—*anxious to see a change in the incidence of taxation.* May I ask when that desire first sprang up in their minds?

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—Four years ago.

Major ATKINSON.—We advocated that long ago.

Mr. MOSS.—I challenge the honorable member to tell me when.

Major ATKINSON.—I will tell you when I speak.

Mr. MOSS.—I challenge the honorable member to deny that, until there arose a cry from this side of the House that the incidence of taxation was unfair—that the taxation was such that the inevitable result must be to make the rich richer and the poor poorer—I challenge him to deny that, until the cry arose from this side of the House for a change in the incidence of taxation, Governments were utterly deaf to what they now admit to be so grievously wrong. And yet we now hear they are all Liberals, strongly imbued with liberal principles, only eager to get on those benches in order to carry their principles into effect. So far as the land-tax is concerned, I was never a very ardent admirer or supporter of that. My own predisposition is to leave transactions of that kind alone as far as possible. I have no antipathies to landholders. I say let them enjoy their land; but do not let them get into a position in which they will rule us who have not these large possessions. I would not interfere with land, except to deprive it of privileges which do not attach to other kinds of property. We hear it said that there is no difference between parties—that the sympathies of all are world-wide—that each party embraces all men. I venture to say that is contrary to human nature. There must be a set of men in every community who believe exclusively in their own class—there must be men who think that, if their own particular sect is prosperous and wealthy, the world is at peace. These men are not Liberals; they cannot be Liberals. A Liberal must be a man who can raise himself above the idea of caste, and look upon all men as having equal rights to have a voice in the management of the affairs of the country. That is my test of Liberalism, and I hold no man to be a Liberal who cannot in-dorse the opinion that every man has a fair and equal right to a fair and equal voice in the government of the country, whatever his position or wealth. In that lies the great issue before us. Then why do we hear such speeches as we have heard to-night from the honorable member for Grey and Bell—why should he support the bill of indictment laid before the House simply because there have been a few errors in administration,—matters which could be easily remedied without turning the present Government out of

office—matters which cannot justify the exertions that are being made on that side of the House to turn the Government out of office? When I notice the persistency of the attempt to oust the present Government, I must be excused for doubting the genuineness of the professions of Liberalism we hear so strongly expressed on that side of the House. I admit there must be some members on the other side of the House who feel differently,—men who have fought hard for the cause of Liberalism, but who now consider that these errors of administration are sufficient to justify them in turning out of office the only really Liberal Government that we have ever possessed in the history of New Zealand—a Government that has proved itself during nearly three years' tenure of office—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Two years'.

Mr. MOSS.—I hope it may be five years'. A Government that has proved itself less self-seeking than any Government that we have ever had in office before, a Government—I speak of the members individually and collectively—that has proved itself more earnestly desirous of bringing the great mass of the people under the shadow of the new Constitution which we are now building up than any previous Government has ever shown itself to be. I will challenge the members of the Government which demolished the old Constitution to show what single thing they did to restore to the people the power that they took from them. Did they propose any extension of the franchise? Did they propose to redistribute the seats in this House. Did they propose to inaugurate a system of real local self-government. Did they propose to have triennial Parliaments, which we hear they are now so anxious to get. No: even when this Government came into office and proposed these measures they were opposed and thwarted in every way. Even the dissolution to which the Government were fairly entitled was refused; and to this wrong—it is a fact that ought to weigh heavily on the shoulders of the Governor who refused the dissolution—are to be attributed the evils which have since occurred. The Premier had to meet a House in every respect hostile to him, and he had to select his colleagues from among a body of men who were not united among themselves. And what do we find is the result? Errors committed by these individual members of the Cabinet are laid upon the head of the Premier himself. Of course, we all know that the Premier must, constitutionally, be held responsible for the acts of the Government individually and collectively, and I have no wish at all to shield him from that responsibility; but I do say one thing: that, knowing that for the acts of extravagance, acts of partial appointments to offices, and so forth, which are the basis of the indictment now brought forward—so well brought by the honorable member for Selwyn—the member of the Government less censurable than anybody is the Premier himself. I am sorry indeed to hear from all sides of the House statements that the Premier is the person who must be got rid of from the Ministry. We are told, "Oh, get rid of Grey, and you will find the whole

thing will be right." I cannot understand it, and it makes me doubt the sincerity of some of those who raise the cry, and believe that there must be some other reason than that of anxiety for liberal measures, as they would have us think. I should like to refer to one other matter connected with a late Government, a very late Government: the honorable member for Egmont no doubt will know the Government I refer to. It made a great impression upon my mind, so great an impression that it influenced me greatly in forming my opinions. It was a scene that occurred upon the floor of this House. The Hon. the Premier, as Superintendent of Auckland, charged the Government with illegal conduct in connection with certain land transactions, and the statements of that gentleman were denounced as untrue. He sent a telegram to the Commissioner of Crown Lands to learn the particulars at the official source, in order that he might substantiate his charges, when it turned out that the Government, at the moment they were denying the statements on the floor of this House, had actually despatched a telegram prohibiting the Government Agent in Auckland from giving the information desired. That is the pure sort of Government we are asked to restore, and it is the party who could do such things that now make charges against this Government and ask us to act on those charges. The honorable member for Selwyn made a charge that the Government used the steamers in a most improper way, to influence votes—that they used public property for electioneering purposes; and the honorable member quoted from the records of the Imperial Parliament a resolution which set out that certain conduct was highly improper, and altogether subversive of the liberties of the people—the conduct being interference by Ministers with parliamentary elections. I was very much impressed with that, and thought it a most proper quotation, until I looked it up, and found that the interference so stigmatized was interference by the Government with dockyard employés to coerce them to vote for Government candidates. Why, there is not the shadow of a suspicion of anything of that kind against the Government. They certainly took the "Hinemoa" in order to convey the Premier to Christchurch and other parts of the colony; but does that justify these charges of corruption? Then it was said the telegraph had been brought into use for electioneering purposes; but where is the proof? One little miserable telegram is alleged to have been sent.

An Hon. MEMBER.—One specimen.

Mr. MOSS.—An honorable member calls it a "specimen." Well, all on this side of the House are disposed to believe it was the only instance, and I challenge any honorable member to prove that there were any more. Will the honorable member give us the slightest ground for believing it is not the only one? Still, I must say it took me by surprise. I cannot understand it, and know nothing about it. But, after all, these charges are, comparatively speaking, very trivial—charges such as were never before made against any Government that has had in its charge such mea-

sures as this Government have charge of. I think, before honorable members are induced to give their votes against the Government on such charges as these, even if true, that it would be well to ask who are to come after—who are to succeed those gentlemen on the Treasury benches. That is what I should like to know. Are we to have a repetition of that wretched state of affairs when one man directed the Assembly, when the most base influences were brought into play, both inside and outside this House, if opposition was manifested? I am personally prepared to prove this, if any honorable members will put me upon the proof. I can prove that most base and unworthy influences were brought to bear against newspaper writers who opposed the Government, and against any one who raised his voice in opposition. I ask, are we to have a repetition of that, or are we to have a Government on those benches that will content themselves with merely professing Liberalism? Is that what the Liberal party is dividing itself for? Honorable members need not tell me that this party, once broken, can be brought together readily, when a Liberal Government is driven from those benches. When a new Government once gets there, and is possessed of power, it is a very difficult thing to dislodge it.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—Hear, hear.

Mr. MOSS.—Unless their following is composed of men like the honorable member for Cheviot, who come into the House as supporters, and then vote against them. But even that process takes time; and I ask you, when we are defeated—if we are defeated—and the shattered members of the Liberal party seek reunion, do you suppose that will be an easy task? I confess I look forward with great doubt and dislike to the prospect, and therefore intend to give a hearty and cordial vote for the Government; until, at least, we have allowed them to avail themselves of this the first—the very first—opportunity they have had to carry into effect the policy they have so long promised the country.

Mr. GISBORNE.—Sir, I think, if there is one point which must have struck old members of the House with considerable surprise, it is the remarkable contrast which exists between the amendment moved by my honorable friend the member for Selwyn, and that moved last session by the then leader of the Opposition, Sir William Fox. When I look at the amendment moved to the Address in Reply last session by the then leader of the Opposition, I find that no policy was then indicated on the part of the Opposition. The mind of the Opposition was then a *tabula rasa*, susceptible of inscription afterwards. I suppose it was going to be educated. But now we see the germ of a policy in the amendment of the honorable member for Selwyn; but that policy is not theirs: it is ours. I congratulate the Opposition upon having at last achieved something like a policy, although it is rather an appropriation of the property of others. And the difference that exists between the amendment of my honorable friend and that of the leader of the Opposition last session is that the amendment of Sir William Fox was a sort of general commination of the Ministry. It

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consigned the Government to absolute and instant political perdition. The amendment of the honorable member for Selwyn is rather a mild moral lecture, and is couched in terms calculated to lead sinners to repentance: it really holds out to us a sort of prospective purgatory. Although we may be surprised at this important difference between the two amendments, we have not far to go to seek the cause of it. We have, since last session, undergone the process of what is called "going to the country." We still have a vivid recollection of that ordeal; and what the country insisted upon was the policy indicated in the Governor's Speech last session. That was impressed upon the minds of the Opposition, and they have profited thereby. Then the violent outcry that was raised against the Government last session has fallen quite flat upon the ears of the people of the country. The people have annulled the verdict on appeal to them during the elections. I say that, if the people believed one tithe of the grave charges which were levelled against the Government last session, there would not now be a majority of fourteen against us, as there was then, but a majority of forty. And I ask, do the most sanguine members of the Opposition believe that there will be a majority of even four against the Government? I believe in that calculation you might read the word "majority"—"minority." Where are the fourteen gentlemen who represented the majority against the Government last year? They have disappeared. They have gone to the country and there they have remained. They are virtually rusticated from Parliament. We see, then, the cause of this difference between the two amendments. And there is also a great difference in the manner of their introduction. The speech of the honorable member for Wangai last session was almost outrageous in the language used, while the speech of my honorable friend the member for Selwyn was quiet and calm to a degree in contrast to that of the preceding leader of the Opposition. But, Sir, the amendment of my honorable friend is open to criticism. It begins by saying, "We are prepared to give effect to the liberal measures desired by the country." What does that mean? It means that some of the Opposition will be reluctantly compelled to vote against their convictions, in order to keep their seats in Parliament on principles which they pretended to advocate in the speeches that gained them those seats. That is not satisfactory. Then we come to the censure of the Government, and it is, that the Ministry, "as at present constituted," have not the confidence of the House. What do the words "as at present constituted" mean? I do not suppose this House could have confidence in a Ministry "as not at present constituted." Therefore these words are introduced with some intention. I fail to find any precedent for the use of such words, excepting in the case, in 1866, when the present honorable member for Ashley moved a want-of-confidence motion in the same words—Mr. Stafford being Premier at the time. What was the effect of that motion? The effect was, that the Premier got rid of three or four of his colleagues, and took over Mr. Hall and two or

three others from the Opposition side to form a new Ministry. Does the honorable member for Selwyn desire a similar process on this occasion?

Mr. HALL.—Certainly not.

Mr. GISBORNE.—Then what does he mean? Does he mean that he wishes to displace the Premier? If so, surely he has sufficient knowledge of constitutional practice to be aware that if he displaces the Premier he displaces the whole Ministry. What, then, is the object of the words "as at present constituted"? The honorable gentleman, in order to catch some stray votes, has put in those words; but I cannot see any other object in them. If the Premier resigns, the whole Ministry resigns, and the honorable member for Selwyn says he does not want to come over with some of his friends and join the Premier on these benches. I should like to say a few more words with regard to this amendment. It is to me quite a new phase of political morality for a great party in opposition to say to a Government, "We will take your places, and will pass your policy." I say it is unprecedented, and inconsistent with every principle that should govern morality in party and Parliament. There are occasions on which the party in power are pledged to administer the measures of their predecessors, and even to pass measures proposed by their predecessors; but there is no precedent, as far as I am aware, in the history of any constitutional country, for an Opposition to say, "We will turn out the Government, and then we will adopt their policy and pass their measures." When Sir Robert Peel was converted to the repeal of the Corn Laws he was in power; but what did he do? He at once resigned office, saying it was proper that Lord John Russell, who had advocated that measure, should have an opportunity of forming a Ministry to pass it. Lord John Russell was unable to do so, and Sir Robert Peel came back into office, and passed the repeal of the Corn Laws, but was turned out of office immediately afterwards for holding the anomalous position of passing the measures of a Government to which he was opposed. Before I proceed to the charges raised by the honorable gentleman against the Government, I should like to say a few words on the general question. I ask, if the Opposition come into power, have we any guarantee or reliance that they will give practical effect to the Liberal policy? How are the people, how are we here, to know that they will do so? We know that some members of that party are opposed to the extension of the electoral franchise; we know that some of them are against triennial Parliaments; we know that some of them do not believe in an alteration of the present incidence of taxation, and even go so far that they would wish to repeal the land-tax, and reimpose the duties that have been reduced on the necessities of life; we know that some of them wish the present system of private purchase of Native land to go on, and be even more unrestricted than it is at present. We also know that there are some of them who would wish to see local government minimized and put altogether into confusion in order that they might have one central body—one Legislature—dealing with all matters from the seat of

Government. I ask, Are these elements which should inspire confidence in the people of New Zealand that the Opposition who now seek power would do justice to the policy on which the people have set their hearts? I would ask honorable members—and I would especially ask new members, who are now at the outset of their parliamentary life, when a false step more than ever may compromise the public usefulness of their future career—to ponder well concerning the vote they are about to give. If they disapprove of the policy, then let them reject the policy and reject its authors. But, if they approve of its principles, do not let them sacrifice the policy to any personal feeling of prejudice against its authors. I ask them not to send the sheep-dogs to the forest, and bring in the wolves to watch the fold. What would you do in private life? Would you place a precious and cherished charge in alien and suspicious hands? Would you ask Brigham Young to take charge of your wives, or Mr. Squeers to educate your children? Well, then, I say, show the same solicitude for public interests. Do not imperil, do not emasculate, this policy by intrusting it to the sinister charge of a party half of which cannot agree with its principles and half of which has no faith in its merits. I will now proceed to the charges which the honorable gentleman has made against the Government, and I must say, with regard to those charges, that they are less like articles of impeachment than like some scandal picked out of the gossip of a Sunday newspaper. They are more like some miscellaneous lot of articles put up to auction. But, Sir, as far as they go, I will refer to some of them. I have seen something of Ministries in my life, and I will guarantee, in a day, with a pair of scissors and the Blue Books, to frame a much more formidable indictment against any Ministry which has held office for at least a year—not excepting the Ministry of which the honorable member for Selwyn was a distinguished member for three years. I will take, first, the expense of steamers. Now, I ask honorable gentlemen who know anything about it—and I speak on this subject without any personal concern, as I have not, since I have been a Minister, travelled in either of the Government steamers—I ask any one who knows what Ministerial duties are, what would be the effect of a Minister always travelling in the ordinary coastal steamers? Take the East Coast, for instance. Suppose a Minister has to go to Napier and be engaged there for a day, and then has to go to Poverty Bay, and perhaps on to the East Cape and to Auckland. Very well: if he takes an ordinary steamer, it will land him at Napier, but will not wait long enough to enable him to transact his business and go on to Poverty Bay; and he will have to remain in Napier, doing nothing, for a week, until another steamer comes up the coast. Then, again, the steamer may not stay at Poverty Bay more than three or four hours, and perhaps the Minister may be unable to go on, and may have to remain there for several days; and the same thing may happen at the East Cape. I say that any man who has had any experience of the duties of a Minister ought to be well aware that

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it is generally much cheaper to use the "Stella" and the "Hinemoa" than to take passages in the ordinary coastal steamers. Then I come to the question of Native affairs. It is said that Native affairs are in a worse position now than they were in 1877, when the present Ministry came into office. Now I am not prepared to admit that. It does not follow because the outward symptoms of the Native difficulty are more manifest now in a point of view which is injurious to the country, that therefore Native affairs are in a worse position than they were when the symptoms were concealed. An internal disease is often much more dangerous than an external one, although the symptoms of the external one may be more manifest than those of the internal one. The proper and just comparison would be to say what would have been the state of Native affairs now if they had been continued to be intrusted to the hands of the preceding Ministry? That is a proper comparison to make; and I say, after my experience of these two years which have passed, that I believe, if the Grey Ministry had not succeeded to office, we should have been in a much worse position than we are now with regard to Native affairs. I believe we should have had a war on the West Coast; and what war means has been very well described by preceding speakers. Then, Sir, with regard to this very West Coast, what is the Government blamed for? The late Government ordered the survey of the Waimate Plains to be made. This Government gave instructions for that survey to be postponed until they made further inquiries. They made those inquiries, and then ordered the survey to be proceeded with. Then the surveyors were turned off the plains, and a disturbance occurred. But are the Government blamed for delaying the order of their predecessors; or are they blamed for putting the surveyors on afterwards? They cannot be blamed for both. Either they were premature in putting the surveyors on the plains, or they were too cautious in delaying or withholding the order of their predecessors; but they could not be too cautious and too premature at the same time, and therefore one charge counteracts the other. Then, with regard to Te Whiti: What is the fact? There are 150 fighting men in prison, who, I believe, but for the judicious conduct of the Native Minister and the Premier, would have been fighting against us. Those men may perhaps in future be usefully employed in the interests of the country, and in a more advantageous manner than they would have been if it had not been for the action of the Government. At all events they are now restrained from fighting against us. The next point is that of finance. The Premier was blamed for not making an elaborate Financial Statement last session. It was at the particular request of the then leader of the Opposition that he did not make an elaborate Financial Statement. But he made such a Statement as he thought right; and he accompanied it with tables which showed the position of the country.—(No.)—They would show the position to any one who would take the trouble to examine them. In reference to the

important part of the financial question, it is conceded by my honorable friend the member for Selwyn that the Minister for Public Works made a lucid and satisfactory Statement. Well, that is the Statement which people at Home look at. They want to know what our railways pay. They do not want to see departmental details which are contained in an ordinary Financial Statement; they look to the Public Works Statement. After all, it is not what the Colonial Treasurer says that is of importance, but the tables and returns; and the position of the colony is gathered from those returns, and from the newspapers, and what people write about the country. These are what the capitalists in England judge from, and not from what the Colonial Treasurer of the day happens to say in his Financial Statement. Then, Sir, I come to the charge about Government advertisements, and I think that my honorable friend the member for Selwyn must regret that he spoke as he did on this subject. In one breath the honorable gentleman spoke of the Press as the palladium of colonial rights, and in another breath he characterized it as a venal and degraded Press, whose patriotism was to be gauged by the price of a few Government advertisements. I think it is really derogatory to himself, and derogatory to the public Press of New Zealand, that he should make such an accusation. What a colonial palladium it would be! A palladium that could be hawked about and sold by auction to any Government that chose to bid a few pounds' worth of advertisements! Why, Sir, the constituencies of this country have returned many journalists to this House. It is an insult to those gentlemen, and a libel upon them and upon the papers which are under their charge, to say that they would be influenced, either in their action in this House or in the conduct of their papers, by any bribe the Government might offer in the shape of a few paltry advertisements. And, Sir, the honorable gentleman seems to have a mean opinion of constituencies which return members to support the Government. He spoke of myself, and of the constituency I represent. I pass by the remarks which he made in reference to myself, as I think they were made in the spirit of good-humoured raillery. I do not suppose he meant to impute to me that I was guilty of political corruption, or that my constituents were corrupt, or that he meant to convey that impression. But I must protest against my constituency being represented as having returned me without opposition because I turned the sod of the first section of the Mikonui Water-race. The honorable gentleman talked of my constituency as being a very small one. But he must remember that a mining constituency is not represented by the mere names on the roll. There are many miners who vote by virtue of their miners' rights. Their names do not appear on the roll, and the honorable gentleman cannot judge of the size of the constituency by merely seeing the roll.

Mr. HALL.—I did not say the number on the roll. I said that the population was only 2,600.

Mr. GISBORNE.—I thought the honorable gentleman was referring to the number on the

roll. But he made another mistake. Ross is one centre; but there is another large centre—Woodstock—quite unconnected with Ross, and there are other centres of population in the district also unconnected with Ross; and, if the electors in any centre had been dissatisfied with my parliamentary conduct, nothing could have been easier for them than to have put a candidate up in opposition to me. But what I want to protest against is the imputation made against my constituents that they were actuated by mercenary motives. I went, two and a half years ago, to that constituency and contested it, on very short notice, and as a complete stranger, and not as a Government candidate, and I was opposed by two local residents who were necessarily better acquainted than I was with the local wants, and more interested in them; and I was returned by a large majority. And I say, on behalf of that constituency, that there is no more intelligent or honorable constituency in New Zealand. I wish to refer to another remark the honorable gentleman made, and which I was very sorry to hear. He made an imputation, as I understood, against the Returning Officer for being present on the occasion of the turning of the first sod of the Mikonui Water-race. Now, the Returning Officer is Dr. Giles, than whom there is no more honorable and able gentleman in the Civil Service. He was Under Secretary for Lands under the administration of the honorable member for Egmont, and now holds a high judicial office; and he is universally respected in the district in which he lives. I say there can be no imputation against Dr. Giles for being present on the occasion referred to. It was the inauguration of an important public work; there was no party question involved; and Dr. Giles said nothing at all on that occasion—and I was close to him—which could be in any way imputed to him as a fault. It is a very curious thing that the honorable gentleman should show his appreciation of the Civil Service by making undeserved imputations against one of its most eminent and distinguished officers. With regard to the Civil Service, what charge did the honorable gentleman make against the Premier? That during the course of two years one person, Mr. Luckie, has been appointed to a special office—that is, as Commissioner of Insurance—and that an old Civil servant was not appointed. Why, I could mention four or five instances in which the Ministry of which my honorable friend was a member put persons who had no claims upon the Civil Service right above the heads of Civil servants—persons who had no claim to anything at all. I do not suppose the honorable gentleman wishes me to name a case. Well, Sir, under these circumstances some allowance should be made. Surely the errors of judgment—if they are errors of judgment—of a Ministry which has been only two years in office should not be charged against them as high crimes and misdemeanours. Then I come to the charge relative to the care of the lunatics. It was said that the lunatics in the asylums of the colony had been greatly neglected. Why, Sir, what was the condition of these asylums when they were handed over

to the Ministry? It was worse than at present. When I came into the House two years ago I myself asked a question about the asylums, and I found that, out of the money actually appropriated by the House for their maintenance and management, the Government of the honorable member for Egmont had saved £19,000, which they claimed as a reduction of expenditure. The money which they ought to have spent, but did not spend, they claimed as a saving. Now, just let the House mark the difference in circumstances. Instead of saving £19,000, the present Government has contracts in hand to the extent of £50,000 for the improvement of the lunatic asylums. I come then to the question of the telegrams. The honorable gentleman has pounced upon one stray telegram, which it seems was not paid for; but has he any ground for saying that the Ministry as a whole have despatched their electioneering telegrams at the public expense? I can say at once and without hesitation that every telegram connected with my election was paid for by me, and I feel confident that I can make the same statement on behalf of my colleagues: at all events, they are here to speak for themselves. Therefore that charge falls to the ground. To lead the House to believe that it was a permanent practice on the part of Ministers to forward electioneering telegrams at the cost of the public is a misleading statement which ought not to have been made upon insufficient grounds. I was perfectly well aware of the contents of the report of the Telegraph Committee of 1871, and acted in strict accordance with the recommendations of that Committee. Well, Sir, I will not delay the House any longer. I will only say, in reference to this great impeachment, that it really resolves itself into a personal attack upon the Premier. It originated in a feeling of spite on the part of some, because he has roused the country to a sense of its rights, and because he rudely awakened a slumbering Ministry. I say it is due to my honorable friend that this liberal policy is now in the position in which it is in the popular mind. If it had not been for his efforts we should have heard very little about the policy on this side of the House, and we should have heard nothing at all about it on the other. Well, Sir, the Opposition have been compelled to advocate this policy, and in expiation of their inconsistency they wish now to sacrifice the author of the policy. My honorable friend can well afford to be indifferent to such attacks, for in vindication of his public character he can well appeal from the clamorous and cavilling criticism of to-day to the judicial verdict of posterity. In after-generations the name of my honorable friend will stand high in the catalogue of statesmen. During a long course of public life it has been his happy lot to fulfil successfully two distinct characters—two characters which, so far as I know, have never before been combined in one individual. For nearly twenty-five years, as the representative of the Sovereign, he has rendered eminent services to outlying portions of the British Empire; these services are imperishably recorded in the annals of South Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa: and in his maturer

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years, as a representative of the people, he has devoted his great ability, not to the acquisition of wealth, not to the achievement of personal distinction, but to the improvement of the political and social condition of his fellow-men: not men who are to be found among the titled, the wealthy, and the powerful, but men who compose the masses of the people—whose life, from the cradle to the grave, is as a rule a continuous series of privation and suffering. I hear some honorable gentlemen laugh. This may be a ludicrous matter to them, but I say that the efforts of my honorable friend have been successful in giving a strong onward impetus to a movement which is now agitating mankind. I believe the outcome of that movement will sooner or later regenerate the civilized world. It does not invade rights; it only redresses wrongs. Without that movement civilization can only become rotten to the core—a mere whitened sepulchre. That movement involves mighty issues. The object of that movement is to obliterate as far as possible the painful, the calamitous conflict which, throughout the civilized world, prevails between the concentrated accumulation of inordinate wealth on the one hand and the general diffusion of abject poverty on the other. The object of that movement is to adjust the relations of capital and labour—those gigantic agencies in the conduct of human affairs—so that neither shall vex or oppose the other, but that both jointly shall work together in securing the greatest good to the greatest number. The object of that movement is to minimize pauperism, to bring contentment to every home, to secure the rights of the people, and to establish all over the world liberal and humane government. Sir, engaged in that heroic work my honorable friend can well afford to regard with indifference passing misrepresentation and obloquy. They are as the dust of his chariot-wheels. I trust my honorable friend may live to reap the reward of his labours in seeing gratitude “smiling in a nation’s eyes.” I feel sure that his public services will have materially contributed to raise a monument of good which lapse of time can only strengthen and enlarge, and that he will leave behind him a name which will be held in grateful remembrance in the hearts of thousands of sons of toil, as the name of one who was the champion of their cause when that cause found but little favour and much hostility in high places—as of one who has eloquently asserted in their behalf the sacred principles of freedom and of justice.

Mr. DICK.—I have listened with a great deal of interest to the speeches delivered during the present debate, and I observe that the Northern members especially seem to be well informed as to what is going on, and to make a strong defence of the Ministry. The honorable member for Auckland City East, though a young member, seems to know a great deal about what has been done. He gives us his opinions in abundance of words, and perhaps says almost too much. He seemed as if he had something of a little importance to tell us; and, in fact, he rather alarmed a young member like myself. He told us that in a session or two, when certain Bills

were passed, we should probably have to go back to our constituents, and that if we failed to support the Ministry we should be sent to the quiet retirement of our homes, and never be allowed to show our faces here again. I hope that he is mistaken; but, if he is not, I must run the risk of the solemn threat which he has given, and venture, not only to vote, but to speak in opposition to the Government as at present constituted. The honorable member also referred to certain Native matters, which I am not thoroughly up in, but which I venture to have an opinion upon, notwithstanding that I am a Southern member. I think he did an injustice to the Opposition in telling us that when Ministers went to different parts of the country in order to settle disturbances amongst the Natives it was found that members or delegates of the Opposition were there to interfere with and upset the work which the Government undertook. If the papers report rightly it is not so. There are persons who are called land-jobbers, who, I believe, do get in there occasionally, and upset, to a certain extent, the work of Ministers when they are trying to set the country right; but I do not think it is fair to charge such a thing as that upon honorable members of the Opposition. Now, in reference to those Native affairs, I have been watching with some interest what has been going on recently in regard to them. I know that a short time ago there was an effort made to reach the Native King, and to induce him to be guided by the advice and teaching of the Premier and the Native Minister. Watching the progress of that affair, I think our Government, with the Premier and his supporter, did not do themselves or the country justice in hanging on and using all sorts of humble efforts to reach the King Natives and to get a little talk with them. It seemed to me that a better and more successful course would have been to have kept entirely aloof from the Natives, to have taken no notice whatever of them, and then to have allowed them to hold a meeting and go away home again. However, the Premier seemed to think otherwise, and got amongst them. So far as his action after that goes, I, for one, am not prepared to condemn it. I think he acted rightly in the position he took up in withdrawing from them, and in a determined manner giving them notice that the proposed arrangements were withdrawn. But I think the subsequent course taken by the Government was undignified and unfair, in taking hold of a chief as they did, flattering him, spending money upon him, and treating him as they would not have treated any European of the highest class—making the Natives believe that all they had to do was to make a disturbance first, and then become our friends, when they would be sure to be tenderly treated, flattered, and have money spent upon them to any amount. I do not know how this chief Rewi will get on; but I venture to say that such a course as that is a very profitable one for Native chiefs. It will probably not be long before he has another excuse for getting at variance with the Government, in order that he may have a few more thousands spent upon him, in order that he may again

be flattered by Premiers and Native Ministers showing him round as they did the other day, with telegrams about him flying all over the country, making a noise about him as if he were superior to Kings, Governors, Premiers, and every one else in the colony. Then, after that, there was naturally a disturbance on the West Coast, and the Native Minister went down to settle that matter. In that case there was, I think, a very marked want of decision and of firm action. I do not profess to know anything about how these things should be carried on, but, judging from the telegrams in the newspapers that reached us, and from what appeared to be the proper course, I think that, instead of waiting until the Natives began ploughing the land and obeying Te Whiti, the more honorable and courageous course would have been to humour Te Whiti in his desire for martyrdom, by arresting him instead of those poor fellows who obeyed his commands, by bringing him to Wellington, and by keeping him here until matters were quiet on the West Coast. Of course I am not skilled in these concerns; but that seemed quite a simple thing to do in order to put matters right. Native matters generally seem to be in a sort of confused and unsettled condition, which does not support altogether the claim which those honorable gentlemen make to have the management of Native affairs. We know that the Premier has for many years considered himself a great power amongst the Natives. We remember that, when the war at Waitara broke out in 1860, the Premier was at the Cape, and as soon as the news reached him we are told he sent word to the English Government offering his services to come to this country to put that war down and settle the Native question entirely for the future. He did come; he was appointed Governor of the country for the second time; and he probably did something as Governor towards settling the Native question. I will not for one moment refuse him what is his due as Governor of this colony, but I think he has not as Prime Minister, and in company with the Native Minister, displayed that decision and that clearness of action which we might have expected from his long experience, and from his warm desire to do justice to the Native question. The honorable member who spoke last complimented the Premier, and told us how his name would go down to posterity in the most glowing colours that could possibly be conceived. I will not say how the Premier's name will go down to posterity. I hope all his evil deeds will be buried with his bones, and that his good deeds only will live after him; but I do think that posterity would have had a better account of him if he had never departed from his position as Governor. If he had never taken his position on the floor of this House, and had never taken an active and, to my thinking, an unsuccessful part in the management of the affairs of the country—if he had never taken a position beneath that of Governor—his memory would have been more respected, and his action more completely such as men would consider right. When the honorable gentleman took office nearly two years ago, I confess I heard it with some

degree of satisfaction, because I had previously read of the wonderful things he was going to perform, in the way of improving the affairs of this country, reducing the expenditure, and in every respect making his a model Government, and this country a model country for the whole world to look at. But I find that it has been rather the reverse, and that after two years the honorable member has failed to carry out most of those promises which he made to the House. We were informed before he took office that he would reduce the expenditure of the country by £100,000 in a very short time—that if he were permitted to retire for half-an-hour he would come back with the estimates reduced to that extent. When I read that, I thought that surely he was the Premier that the country needed; because we had been spending very freely, and getting into debt more and more. It struck me that, if he could reduce the expenditure in such a way, there must really be tremendous extravagance somewhere. Well, now we find there has been no reduction. We find that, although the former Government chastised us with whips, this Government has chastised us with scorpions. The expenditure on the Civil Service and the outlay for the management of the country have become greater and greater. The honorable member for Auckland City East tells us that that must be so, that no Government can reduce the expenditure, and that any Government coming in will still increase the expenditure. I am not prepared to say that, but I am prepared to say that, when honorable members make promises that if they are put upon the Government benches they will completely and successfully reduce the expenditure, we have a right to look to them to perform their promises, and if they fail to do so we have a right to say, We shall not follow you any further. Then the Premier, when out of office, talked a great deal about the "Hinemoa" and other vessels. His late Treasurer also stated that that vessel or another would be sold very quickly. To-day I asked what had been done in the matter, and we were informed that those vessels were absolutely needed for the service of the country. I am not quite up in the affairs of the country in that respect, but, after watching the course of the "Hinemoa," it seems to me that a very great part of her time is occupied not in taking troops, or for other purposes connected with the service of the country, but in taking Ministers, and especially the Premier, while engaged in doing services to their party. I remember that at the time when there was some demand for the steamer on behalf of His Excellency she seemed somehow or other to find her way up to a small island near Auckland, and to remain there for an extraordinary length of time. Then, Sir, I was disappointed to find that the "Stella" brought the honorable gentleman down south at the time I was trying to get in for the City of Dunedin. I really began to fear that my chances of getting in were in danger, because it was threatened—at least, almost threatened—that we should be turned to the right-about if we did not support his views. He went to Invercargill, and there, I am informed, he succeeded

Mr. Dick

in reducing the majority of the gentleman who is returned to represent that town. He then came to Dunedin. I do not know what the effect of his address there was; but I know that on the Saturday evening he gave us his views at a public meeting, and on the Sunday morning he took a special train for Lyttelton. I know that from there the steamer carried him north, and at such a rate that it has been unfit for anything since. That seems to be the work which the "Hinemoa" is intended to do, and, if so, I agree with the opinion of the Premier when he was in opposition, that that vessel ought to be sold. I was disappointed and grieved to hear the honorable gentleman last night say that he would do the same thing again if he had the opportunity. I do not know how the honorable member can square it with his conscience to use the property of the country to go on electioneering tours, and to try and advance what he calls the liberal opinions of his party. But the honorable member knows best what is really right according to his own conscience. I hope that, if this is his view, he will very soon not have the power to carry it out again—that he will not have an opportunity of turning the electors with shame and sorrow from the liberal principles which he professes to advocate. I say that more injury has been done to the Liberal cause by such courses as these than can be possibly conceived. I, for one, though a Liberal, have through such proceedings as these been turned from being willing to support the honorable gentleman who is now at the head of the Government. Then we have, as my honorable friend beside me (Mr. Moss) has told us, a Government in a disunited state. We are told that a house divided against itself cannot stand. We have seen in past times how the Government was divided against itself, and it was painful to read in the telegrams how the members of the Government seemed to disagree. I suppose it is quite probable that there was something more made in the telegrams of these dissensions than really was the case; but it was manifest that the Government were not united in any way amongst themselves—that they had simply a sort of cohesion, but each one was left to a certain extent to do what was right in his own eyes. We saw it in the case of an appointment made in the Insurance Department. I do not defend the action of those who appointed Mr. Luckie to that position; I think it was wrong; I think that the action in that matter was improper; but I also think it was a strange thing for the Government to come to such loggerheads about the matter after it was completed. I believe that the Hon. the Premier was right in resisting the appointment if he had resisted at the right time; but he came to it too late, and failed in consequence to do what was the right thing. He made the Government appear ridiculous, quarrelsome, and divided in the eyes of the country. I do not think that at the present time the Government as it exists displays altogether united action. Probably the Premier is gathering up the reins now, and trying to drive the team all united; but hitherto it has not been so, and perhaps it is almost too late to begin to try to bind them to-

gether. I trust that it is so. Then it has been said that this debate is not upon the actions of the Government, but is in reality an attack upon the liberal purposes, intentions, and views of the Government. I, for one, most heartily deny that. I am not here to oppose liberal measures; I am here most sincerely to support everything which is truly liberal and for the advancement of the country. My honorable friend here says, Let us pass these liberal measures, and then let the Government retire to the Opposition benches. I say that that is not what should be done. My opinion is this: that when the honorable members towards the close of last session found themselves in a minority of fourteen, and found the Opposition declaring that it was not the measures they were opposed to, but the men, the Ministry at that time should have retired, and said, "Well, since this is your opinion, since you are dissatisfied with us and not with our measures, we are quite willing to retire and let you carry through these measures." They should have taken from them a promise that these measures would be carried on; they should have stated that they would support their successors in carrying through those measures which were so dear to the hearts of those gentlemen who call themselves Liberals. When those measures were carried—some of them had been carried before almost in their entirety—when those measures were carried, and the new electoral districts were marked off, then would have been the time to have gone to the country and to have taken the votes of the people on the new laws which had been passed for the benefit of the country. My honorable friend the member for Totara has attacked previous Administrations for the way in which they have acted. Now, I am not prepared to defend previous Administrations. I do not think we are here to put into the Government just those gentlemen who on previous occasions have been on those seats. I trust we shall find men here who are fit to take the reins of office and to carry forward the most liberal measures for the country—men who are not in the position of some who have in previous Ministries done one or two things which are objected to. I am not prepared to say that there are not some members of this House who have done one or two of these objectionable things. When we find men, whoever they may be, or to whatever class they belong, doing an injustice to the country, taking an advantage of their position to advance their own interests, or to injure the interests of the community at large, I say that in that case they forfeit to a certain extent the support of this House and of the country, and, in so far as they have done so, they should not be supported in the future. There are in the Opposition and in the Government men who have been objected to. I would rather give a chance to those not objected to than allow those to continue in office who by their mismanagement of the affairs of the country are carrying it fast to ruin—a ruin which is the more sad because it is done in the name of liberalism and justice. I have heard it argued that there has been no attempt on the part of the Government or members of the

Government to set class against class in this country, and that the thing was done years ago more than it is done now. My honorable friend (Mr. Moss) says that in former times members who are now in the Opposition were those who set class against class in this country. I do not think he is quite correct in making that statement. I do not think so much has been done in that direction in any previous time as has been done within the last two or three years. Formerly men were actuated by a desire to help forward the interests of New Zealand in every respect—men who were working into the possession of land, or those already in the possession of land—we were all working together as willing co-operators in the advancement of this colony. It is true there were occasional troubles between different parties in the country. There were those who were called squatters, against whom some of us had to struggle occasionally pretty earnestly; but we fought our battles, and we found that they were not so bad, after all, as they were sometimes represented. They were willing that their land should be taken under fair circumstances and divided for the benefit of those who desired to purchase land, and we have now no reason whatever to fear that that class, at all events, will do us the least injury in this country. There has been a charge of a system of gridironing the country in a certain part. I will call to the remembrance of my honorable friend the member for Parnell a fact which will perhaps be in his memory as taking place in Otago. One whose name is revered and respected by us all—a determined friend of those who wanted to get land—I refer to Sir John Richardson—did not do the "gridironing" in Otago, but went in for a system of what we called a draughtboard division of the country; and we thought that, in doing that, we were so laying off the land that it would be impossible for persons to possess themselves of large districts of country; and it seems to me that this "gridironing" is something of the same system, though perhaps it has not worked in the same way. I am not acquainted with what was done in Canterbury with reference to the land, but I do know that we thought in Otago that by setting one block apart from another we should manage to keep the country from being possessed in large blocks by single individuals. Now, Sir, we have been at peace amongst ourselves, not dividing class against class, until recently. We had our provincial system, which I am glad to unite with the honorable member for Parnell in considering an excellent system. I was glad to see in the Parliament before last the firm fight that was made and the strong stand that was taken for our provincial institutions. I most heartily sympathized with the then Opposition; but it is not fair to this country to say that this House resisted the will of the country in abolishing those provincial institutions. The members were returned to this House from the country; they were the representatives of the country; the question was fairly debated by the country, and there was a majority returned from the country of members who were authorized to do

away with the provinces, and to establish a central system of government. I regret that that was done; I think it has not been to the interest of the country that it has been done; but, now that it has been done, I think it becomes us to submit to the necessity of the case, and to work out to the very utmost of our power a system of government which shall be to the interest of the country at large. There is a proposal to increase the powers of local bodies. I do not know that it has yet become law, or that it has been brought down before us in the shape of a Bill; but the honorable member for Port Chalmers has urged—and I agree with him—the idea of extending the counties, and giving them increased powers, so that, to a certain extent, at all events, this centralizing policy may be reduced in its evils, and the various parts of the country may once again have the power of spending the money in their own districts, and so working out that provincial system which has been done away with by the resolution of a majority of this House. I hope that that idea will be carried out to some extent in this House, and that we shall, by giving away some of the power which we have to those districts, utilize these counties, and benefit the districts in that way. I feel that this House, as at present constituted, is doing work which it should not do. There is, and there has been, in this House, a taking-up of details—a discussion of small matters which should be left to districts, with power to carry them out apart from this House; and I think we should as much as possible endeavour to carry out principles and administer laws for the general government and well-being of the colony, leaving these details to those large districts which may yet be formed. There has been within the last few sessions an amount of—well, Sir, I do not like to call it log-rolling—in this House—because perhaps it is not; but there has been a sort of bargaining for railways and works in certain districts which I think should be placed beyond the power of individual members. I feel that the temptation is exceedingly great for a member to go out of the way to get a certain benefit for his own district. I know that when gentlemen are at the hustings they are asked questions and made to give promises for certain things in their districts. It should not be in the power of members to do anything of the kind in this House. These things should be beyond the power of honorable members. There should be Commissions or something of that sort to arrange these matters, and it should not be left to individual members to go and say to the Government, “I will give you my vote if you will give me a bridge;” “I will give you my vote if you will give me certain support in a small line of railway;” or anything of that sort. I do not think Governments should be put in such a position; and therefore I am anxious to see that this power is given away to districts formed by this House. If we want to see the result of such things as these—of such bargainings as this—we have only to read some of those discussions, remarks, speeches, and questions which occurred lately in the different districts of this colony. I remember, Sir, that

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an honorable member from the South, in canvassing his district, claimed for himself essential credit, and the support of all those who had a vote, because of the way in which he had obtained a number of little things for the district he had represented; and he seemed to think that he had a perfect right to claim the votes of the electors on that ground. I noticed that a gentleman who was standing for a constituency on the West Coast, before he retired from that position, asked a number of questions, entirely and absolutely connected with that district, of the gentleman for whose benefit he was retiring. He did not ask a single question as to the general principles or policy that the candidate was going to support—whether he was in favour of triennial Parliaments, extension of the franchise, and so on. He asked about bridges, roads, and railways in that district, and nothing more; and when the gentleman said, “Yes, I will support all these,” then the other said, “I will retire.” When these things are left in the hands of members, or, rather, when they are thrust upon members, there is a great danger of log-rolling, and dealing unjustly and unfairly with the true interests of the country, and the grave objects for which the Assembly, representing New Zealand, has met here. The question we shall now have to decide is, not as to what Bills shall be carried, but which party shall carry them. I do not agree with those who think it is a question between Liberals and others. I, for one, am a Liberal, and am prepared to support liberal measures, but I am prepared to see these liberal measures carried by some others than those at present holding seats on the Government benches. They have had two years at their disposal for bringing forward these measures; they have had two years for carrying out all the improvements which they promised us; they have had two years to carry out the economical arrangements which they insisted should be carried out, and on condition of doing which they got their seats there; and now we find them not one whit advanced, and, worse than that, having involved us in difficulties, having trifled with the moneys of the country, having failed to give anything like a statement of how financial matters stood—so much so that I believe we are all in trembling and fear lest it should be found that we are many thousands behind what is thought to be the case—lest the country should find that we are involved in difficulties not beyond remedy, but still so deep and so heavy that our breaths will be taken away when the true state of the case is laid before us. I am prepared to vote for the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Selwyn.

Mr. IRELAND. — Sir, it would hardly be proper on my part if I did not give my reasons for the way in which I intend to vote on the question now before the House. I may say at once that I entered this House upon the votes of those who were in favour of supporting the Grey Government; and I will now proceed to give my reasons why I purpose supporting that Government whenever the division comes off. I will not travel over the ground which has been already gone over by previous speakers

this evening and yesterday: indeed, even if I were capable of doing so, I think it would be very injudicious on my part to attempt to add anything to what has already been said. I listened to the honorable member the leader of the Opposition attentively when he spoke against the Government; but I found his speech was composed mainly of simple assertions, not arguments, and, taking them for what they were worth, they could not be considered as proving the charges made against the Government. The honorable gentleman who has just sat down entered largely into the question of Native affairs, and condemned the Government; but I cannot help thinking that had it not been for the course pursued we should now have been engaged in a Native war. However, I am not going into that—I will leave it to wiser heads; but, nevertheless, I cannot but adhere to the opinion I have expressed. I may state at once that I have not watched the course of politics for some years past, and I am therefore not posted up in the course politics have lately taken; but I must say this: I have been struck with one matter in connection with this debate, and that is, that no arguments of any weight have been brought forward why we should vote against the present Government. Even if it were true that the Ministry had made promises, and had not fulfilled them, is it surprising, seeing they have not been in office long—two years? Surely it is only fair and just to give Governments, as well as individuals, a fair trial before you condemn them. No such liberal policy as was enunciated in the Governor's Speech has ever previously been before the House; while the late elections have shown that those measures are desired by the people. Nor can we forget that the Premier was the first man to enunciate these measures. From the time of Sir Julius Vogel to the present time ample opportunity has been given to Governments to propose liberal measures if they thought fit; but I cannot find that it has been done. I do not mean to say that successive Ministers have not been sincere in their convictions, and in their desire to advance the interests of the country; but they have not proposed measures of so wide and comprehensive a character as those of the present Government, and I am not at all surprised that immediately upon those measures being introduced an attempt should be made to strangle them. I believe that had there been manhood suffrage—and that is a matter that has been very dear to my heart ever since I began to think for myself, because I have always gone on the broad ground that every man should have a vote in respect of his manhood—had manhood suffrage, I say, been in operation during the last elections, the result would have been very different from what it is. I believe that the present Ministry would have had a very large majority in this House. The gentlemen on the opposite side may think differently; but the real truth, I suspect, is that those honorable gentlemen are afraid of manhood suffrage. My own belief is that, although they profess to be Liberals, if they got into office to-morrow they would not carry out their promises. The policy they have

in their hearts differs greatly from the policy of the Government. As to triennial Parliaments, I think that is a step in the right direction. In point of fact, I agree with the whole policy of the Government; and I hope we shall not see them supplanted until effect has been given to the measures which the country has approved. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick) has charged the Government with many sins of omission and commission; but we heard so much of these matters last evening, and they were so thoroughly replied to, that I think I should be wasting the time of the House were I to go into these assertions again. I think every honorable member who seriously considers the state of the country will recognize that the measures of the Ministry are good and wise measures, and will pass over any little shortcomings with which the present Government can be justly charged—assuming that they can be so charged. In the event of the Opposition being successful, it would be very interesting to watch the course those who may take the place of Ministers would pursue. It is very well for them to profess approval of these measures, but it must not be forgotten that up to the present time these measures have not been carried; and before the Opposition turn out the Government they should give some guarantee that the programme of the present Government will be carried out. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick) has read the Premier and the Native Minister a lecture, and has told them that it would have been better to do this and that. It is a very easy thing for members to condemn what is past; but I should like to see the honorable member in office as Premier or Native Minister, and see how he dealt with such difficulties. When I say I should like to see him in office, I use the phrase in the way of argument. I should not really like to see him or any other person placed in the position of the Premier or the Native Minister, because I believe that this colony has been in a most critical condition, and that, had it not been for the skilful management of Native affairs exhibited by them, the country would now have been plunged in bloodshed. The honorable member said he was a Liberal, and would support liberal measures. Why does he not do so? It seems singular to me; though perhaps it is only reasonable to expect that he should be looked upon with jealousy by gentlemen who are so greatly inferior to him politically—gentlemen not capable of taking his place or understanding his mission. It has been said in the course of debate that Ministers have not carried out their promises. It seems to me it would have been impossible for them to have done so last session, for, immediately on Parliament assembling, the then leader of the Opposition proposed an amendment on the Address in Reply, so that no opportunity was given to Ministers to carry out their policy—none whatever; and then the cry is taken up and continued by the Opposition, that the Government will not carry out liberal measures. The Ministry have been given no chance to carry them out. If it had not been

for the firm stand taken by a few persons a session or two ago we should have had very little liberty left; but I believe the public mind is being educated, and will not stop short of anything but real and true Liberalism. I believe one of the most effective measures to that end will be manhood suffrage, and that it will have a wonderful effect in educating the people politically to matters which affect the well-being of this great colony. I hope that, in addition to the measures already enunciated, provision will be made for opening up the land of the country, not in small patches, but in large tracts, so that an opportunity may be afforded to the community at large to obtain land. I believe what was said last night was perfectly correct—namely, that unless some step is taken in the direction of putting a stop to land speculation, we shall, in a very few years, be really worse off than people in England as to land. I can speak for the district I have the honor to represent. For years we struggled to get a few acres of land thrown open, and when we got them they were snapped up in a few days. The people of that district are crying out for land, and I hope, if the present Ministry remain in office, we shall be given an opportunity of occupying the lands of the colony. I was very glad to hear the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick) say he regretted that Provincial Councils were done away with. I have ever regretted the abolition of those Councils, believing, as I sincerely do, that they were perhaps as wise a form of government as it ever entered into the brain of man to conceive. I only hope that the county system which we now have may be so improved as to be able to do the same good work. I stated that my object in speaking this evening was to give the reasons why I intend to vote for the Ministry, and I will now just sum up those reasons. The measures proposed by the Ministry in the Governor's Speech are such as I heartily approve. There is only one point in the policy there enunciated that I have any doubt about, and that is with reference to the fostering of native industries. I should be sorry to see those industries fostered in such a manner as in any way or form to take the shape of Protection. I am a staunch Free-trader, and I believe it is the only system to make a country great, and noble, and prosperous. Some years ago—I believe when the Government of Sir Julius Vogel was in office—protection was afforded to distilleries, and the result was, that the revenue was so affected by the protective duty, in the shape of so much per gallon less on the manufactured article, that the colony had to buy the distilleries out at a pretty high figure. But I believe our present Government is too wise to adopt such a measure as that. I need say no more, except that I shall give my vote to the present Government, believing that in the existing state of the colony it is just the Government to carry out measures which will be for the benefit of the country.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to twelve o'clock p.m.

Mr. Ireland

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 2nd October, 1879.

First Readings—Ngaruawahia Suburban Lands—Hotel Fire-escapes—Land-Tax—Gold Prospectors—Dromore Goods-ahed—S. Phillips—Otago Central Railway—Telegraph Officials—Sydenham Market Reserve—Audit of Local Bodies' Accounts—Kaiapoi Railway Works—Greymouth-Hokitika Railway—Manukau County Tolls—Governor's Instructions and Commission—Bribery Bill—Timaru Unemployed—Commissioner of Railways, Middle Island—Hamilton Railway Bridge—Personal Explanation—Address in Reply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Wellington Harbour Board Bill, Native Lawsuits Bill, Licensing Bill.

NGARUAWAHIA SUBURBAN LANDS.

Mr. WHITAKER asked the Minister of Lands, Why the Government has not yet offered for sale the suburban allotments in the vicinity of the Township of Ngaruawahia? He hoped the honorable gentleman would give a clear and explicit answer to the question, as the matter was of great importance to the people in the township mentioned.

Mr. THOMSON said the Government were taking steps to have the land opened up for sale, and he hoped it would be placed in the market before long.

HOTEL FIRE-ESCAPES.

Mr. SEYMOUR asked the Premier, Whether he will take such steps as may be necessary to compel hotel and lodging-house keepers to provide and maintain facilities for escape from upper rooms in case of fire? It would be within the recollection of honorable members that at a fire which took place in this city there was an unfortunate loss of life. Whether it was attributable to the want of the precautions referred to in the question, he was not prepared to say; but he was sure of this: that, at the more recent terrible tragedy which took place in Dunedin, the loss of life was distinctly attributable to the want of proper means of escape. That was his justification for putting the question, and he hoped the Government would give a satisfactory answer and take the matter into consideration.

Sir G. GREY said the Government would take the matter into consideration. They would also consider, if such provisions were made, to what extent they ought to go, and whether the means of escape should not be provided for the inmates of private houses also. The whole subject would receive careful consideration.

LAND-TAX.

Mr. SEYMOUR asked the Premier, If he will lay before this House a return of the value of all properties in New Zealand under the Land-Tax Act, showing in such return the amount for each borough and county separately, and giving the value with improvements and without improvements?

Sir G. GREY said the return was nearly completed. It had been in course of preparation for some time, and would be laid on the table in a few days.

GOLD PROSPECTORS.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, if it is their intention, during the present session, to introduce a measure providing protection for prospectors for gold in districts that have not been proclaimed gold fields?

Mr. GISBORNE said that prospectors now received assistance from the Government under certain conditions; and, if they discovered a payable gold field, they were entitled to a reward from the £5,000 which had been already voted by the House. With respect to the question itself, he could only say that the whole subject of what protection can be extended to prospectors outside gold fields was under the consideration of the Government, and he was now in communication with the Law Officers in order to ascertain how the law stood, and to see whether any arrangement such as that suggested could be made.

DROMORE GOODS-SHED.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether any instructions have been given for the erection of a goods-shed at Dromore in time for the next grain season? It would perhaps be advisable to give the Minister for Public Works a little information as to the probable traffic that might be expected from the erection of this station during the ensuing season. The Dromore Station stood about midway between Ashburton and Chertsey, and was fully five miles from either of them. It was the outlet for something like 40,000 acres of agricultural land, of which 7,000 acres were under crop; and, with an average harvest, the weight of grain that would be carried next season might be set down at something like 5,000 tons, and with a good season 50 per cent. more. The settlers in that neighbourhood did not wish to ask for any unreasonable expenditure, but, inasmuch as the station at present was represented by a naked siding and a small platform for passengers, they thought it only fair that they should have the accommodation that would be afforded by the erection of a goods-shed before next harvest. It made a great difference to persons in the locality whether they made one or two trips a day with their teams, and was a matter of great importance to the settlers of the district. He laid stress upon this question, because application was made to the Commissioner of Railways about this time last year, and the reply given was that the probable traffic of the station would not justify the erection of a goods-shed. But the traffic would follow the erection of the shed, and without that accommodation the settlers were driven to the alternative of carting their produce either to Ashburton or to Chertsey. He hoped the Minister for Public Works, in his reply, would be able to say that instructions had already been given.

Mr. MACANDREW said there had been several communications on the subject, and the matter had been referred to the department to

be reported upon. A full report had been sent in, from which he found it was considered that further accommodation was not necessary. There was already a siding there, and the stream of traffic flowed in the direction of Chertsey and Ashburton. Under the circumstances, he was advised that the present accommodation was ample. At the same time, after the statement of the honorable member, he would have the matter again inquired into, and perhaps a different conclusion might be arrived at. It was rather a difficult matter to deal with, because they could not have goods-sheds at every second mile on the line. He thought that perhaps the siding and platform might answer the purpose in the meantime.

S. PHILLIPS.

Mr. SWANSON asked the Government, What action, if any, has been taken in the matter of the petition of Samuel Phillips, presented and reported upon during the last session of the Assembly by the Public Petitions Committee?

Mr. THOMSON replied that no action had yet been taken by the Government in the matter; but, from inquiries they had made, they were of opinion that the petition should be referred back to the Committee in order that further evidence might be taken. He proposed to give notice of a motion to that effect.

OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY.

Mr. PYKE asked the Minister for Public Works, When the Government will cause the survey of the Otago Central Railway to be completed from Clyde to Lake Wanaka? He was induced to ask the question at this early period of the session, because the counties were prevented from making roads and building bridges, and the Government were prevented from selling land in the country indicated, until the route the railway would take was known. Under present circumstances, the settlement of the country and the prosecution of public works were at a standstill.

Mr. MACANDREW was informed that the survey was about to be resumed, if, in fact, it had not already been resumed. He had no doubt whatever that it would be completed long before they were in a position to construct that portion of the line. However, for the reasons mentioned by the honorable member, it was desirable that the survey should be completed.

TELEGRAPH OFFICIALS.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Postmaster-General, Whether it is a fact that it is proposed by the Government that operators and other officers in the Telegraph Department should not receive payment for overtime; and that, in addition to morning duty on Sundays, they will be expected to work from five to seven o'clock p.m. without payment for that duty?

Mr. J. T. FISHER said it was proposed to abolish the system of overtime at all large stations; but this would not be done until the staffs were so strengthened that no operator would be called upon to do more than eight hours' duty. The proposed system would prove much more accept-

able and pleasant to the officers than the present one. The staffs of the following stations had already been brought up to the standard, to enable the overtime to be suspended from the 1st October—viz., Hokitika, Greymouth, Timaru, Oamaru, Auckland, Nelson, Grahamstown, New Plymouth, and Wanganui. The extra duty on Sunday was from six to seven p.m., and no overtime for this would be allowed; but, as Sunday duty was taken alternately, it would not bear heavily upon any particular officer.

SYDENHAM MARKET RESERVE.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Minister of Lands, When the title to a piece of land in the Borough of Sydenham, commonly known as the Cattle Market Reserve, will be completed in favour of that borough? Just before leaving home he was informed by the authorities of the borough that this transaction had not yet been completed by the Government gazeteting the necessary notice, although they had undertaken to give this piece of ground to the borough. He wished to know when the transaction would be completed.

Mr. THOMSON said it appeared that the piece of land in question was purchased by the Provincial Government of Canterbury as a market site for the Borough of Christchurch, but, as the land was within the Borough of Sydenham, that borough had the control of the land in the meantime.

Mr. STEVENS would like to ask the honorable gentleman to complete his answer. He wished to know when the matter would be completed in such a manner that the land would become the property of Sydenham, as had been undertaken by the Government.

Mr. THOMSON had given the honorable gentleman all the information he possessed on the subject. He was simply informed that this market reserve was within the limits of the Borough of Sydenham, and that until certain claims which the Borough of Christchurch might have upon the land were settled the Municipal Council of Sydenham had control.

AUDIT OF LOCAL BODIES' ACCOUNTS.

Mr. FINN asked the Government, (1) Whether it is their intention to introduce a measure providing for the audit, by public officers, of the accounts of Municipalities and other public bodies; and (2) whether they will also provide for a similar audit of benefit and building societies? He begged to point out that provision was already made for the audit of County Council accounts, but no audit was provided for municipal and other local bodies' accounts. As to the latter part of the question, he was sure that the Government, owing to the revelations in other parts of the colony, would see that it was absolutely necessary that such a provision should be introduced.

Sir G. GREY said the Government had had under consideration the propriety of subjecting to audit the accounts of all the bodies receiving any Government moneys. Some of the details of what should be done had been agreed upon. In regard to the latter part of the question, the Go-

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vernment had not, up to the present time, considered the subject. He thought it was well worthy of consideration, and it would be taken into consideration at an early date.

KAIAPOI RAILWAY WORKS.

Mr. BOWEN asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Public Works Department will make good the damage done by the railway works to the protective embankments formed by the Kaiapoi Borough Council, as shown by the report of the Resident Engineer, dated 14th November, 1878? The Minister for Public Works would remember that on several occasions he had drawn the honorable gentleman's attention to the fact that the railway works on the Waimakariri River were damaging and destroying the embankment constructed by the Borough Council. The honorable gentleman promised that an inquiry should be made; and the result was, that the engineer reported that an alteration would have to be made. The department, however, had maintained the groin above the Railway Bridge for a long time, greatly to the detriment of the borough. He understood the honorable gentleman to admit at the time that if it were shown that such damage had been done it would be a liability of the department. The engineer who made the report estimated the damage at something like £500. The borough was by no means a rich one. They had had great difficulty in keeping the water out of the town, and he hoped the honorable gentleman would see the fairness of the claim which they made, that the department should make good the damage shown to be done by the manner in which the bridge and groin were originally put across the river.

Mr. MACANDREW said that this had been a *questio vexata* among experts, and there had been several reports upon it. He was inclined to think the damage had been done, but he was not exactly prepared to say that £500 was the amount of damage. He would cause further inquiry to be made to arrive at a definite conclusion. He thought loss had been sustained, and that the Government would have to make good that loss.

GREYMOUTH-HOKITIKA RAILWAY.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether they intend to keep the promises made to the Borough Council of Kumara and the County Council of Westland, relative to authorizing a survey of country between the Rivers Teremakau and Ararua, with a view of deviating from the present surveyed line of the Greymouth and Hokitika Railway, and making a detour so that, when constructed, the line would pass through the towns of Kumara, Goldsbrough, and Stafford? This was a matter of very great importance. Two hundred thousand pounds had been voted by the House for the construction of a railway between Hokitika and Greymouth. Since that line was originally surveyed, a population of five thousand souls had sprung up at a place called Kumara, and it would only require a slight detour in the line to include this township and the townships of Goldsbrough and Stafford. There had been an agitation in favour of making this detour, and the Govern-

ment were asked to authorize the survey. In a letter to the Borough Council they promised to refer the matter to Mr. Blair, the Engineer for the Middle Island, and to place at the disposal of the borough the report of the surveyor. This was only a short time ago, but, seeing that his colleague had on the Order Paper a motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the matter, he thought it only right to ask that this survey should be made, in order to lay the surveyor's report before the Committee, because upon that would greatly depend the construction of this detour.

Mr. MACANDREW replied that there had been a great deal of correspondence with regard to this detour, and he had been asked to make a flying survey. He was told that the detour would involve an expenditure of £250,000, and, that being the case, he had not pressed forward the survey. At the same time that amount was speculative, and in order to set the question at rest it might be well to have the survey made. He would therefore give the necessary instructions. He had really thought that the amount named was altogether beyond their means—at present, at all events; otherwise the survey might have been through before now.

Mr. SEDDON explained that the length of the detour was only eight miles, and at £6,000 per mile it would only cost £48,000. The amount involved altogether in the railway from Grey-mouth to Hokitika was £220,000, and £20,000 extra would pay for this detour.

MANUKAU COUNTY TOLLS.

Major HARRIS asked the Government, if they will have any objection to lay before this House—(1) copies of all correspondence between the Government and the Manukau County Council relative to the abolition of Otahuhu and Slippery Creek toll-bars; (2) a return showing the receipts and expenditure of tolls collected at each of the foregoing toll-bars for the year ending 30th June last; and (3) a return showing receipts and expenditure of tolls collected at Tamaki Bridge for the year ending 30th June last?

Sir G. GREY replied that the correspondence and returns asked for would be laid on the table.

GOVERNOR'S INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMISSION.

Mr. BOWEN asked the Government, if a copy of the Royal Instructions, together with His Excellency's Commission, will be laid before this House at an early date? A promise had been made by the Premier last session that a copy of the Royal Instructions would be laid on the table. An alteration had been made in the form of the Commission and the Royal Instructions, and it was customary to lay such documents on the table of the House.

Sir G. GREY said the Government would apply to His Excellency for a copy of the papers, and when obtained they would be laid on the table of the House without delay.

BRIBERY BILL.

Mr. SAUNDERS asked the Government, if it

is their intention to introduce a Bribery Bill this session? In asking this question, he should like to make a few remarks not of a debatable character, because it was one of those subjects which he should be sorry to prostitute for party purposes in that House. He trusted that all sides of the House would see the importance of a measure of this kind being introduced. He asked the question notwithstanding the present position of the Government, because he found it was necessary that a Bill should be introduced early in the session, or it got slaughtered amongst the innocents. This Bill had been unusually unfortunate in that respect once or twice. They had a Bill, which he thought a very good one, introduced by the Government the session before last. That Bill was unfortunate, and was never passed. He looked upon this question as one of the most important in connection with the power of the electors in this colony to send men to Parliament under equal circumstances, whether rich or poor. It was very important that they should introduce a Bill of this kind as one of the liberal measures. He hoped, no matter what Government sat on those benches, they would be prepared to carry out such a measure. Although he had put the question in the form in which it appeared on the Order Paper, there were two other words which he should like to insert. He should like to put the question in this form: Whether the Government intended to introduce and support a Bribery Bill?—because, when the measure was introduced before, the Government did not support it.

Sir G. GREY replied that the Government had prepared a Bribery Bill, which was already printed, and it was their intention to introduce it at the earliest possible date.

TIMARU UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. WAKEFIELD asked the Government, Whether they have received any communication from the unemployed at Timaru, and whether they will be able soon to employ on public works any considerable number of those who are now seeking work there?

Mr. MACANDREW said the Government had received no communication from the unemployed at Timaru. They had received no communication from the Mayor of the borough or anybody else.

Mr. WAKEFIELD would like the honorable gentleman to answer the latter part of the question.

Mr. MACANDREW said his answer to the latter part of the question was "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." No application had been made to the Government on the subject, and no steps had been taken to meet the case.

Mr. WAKEFIELD did not make any remarks in putting the question, as he assumed that such a communication had been received. He had seen from the newspapers that such a communication had been sent to the Government.

Mr. MACANDREW said no communication had been received by the Government.

COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS, MIDDLE ISLAND.

Mr. DICK asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will lay before this House copies of all correspondence and reports relative to the permanent location of the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island?

Mr. MACANDREW replied that there would be no objection to lay the correspondence on the table, and it was now being copied.

HAMILTON RAILWAY BRIDGE.

Mr. WHITAKER asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the amount required for the construction of the railway-bridge over the Waikato River, at Hamilton, was not included in the sum of £168,000 voted by this House in the session of 1878 for the construction of the Thames-Waikato Railway to Omahu, and part of which vote has been expended between the Thames River and Grahamstown? He was led to ask this question by the somewhat evasive answer given to the House on this subject by the Minister for Public Works. It was stated then by him that the Government would enter into a contract for the construction of the railway bridge at Hamilton so soon as the money was voted for that purpose.

Mr. MACANDREW did not know whether it was exactly parliamentary to characterize the reply of any member of this House as evasive. He supposed the honorable member was new to the forms of the House. He thought the honorable member, in common with others, was labouring under a misapprehension upon this subject. In the first place, no such sum as £168,000 had been voted by this House for the construction of this railway. The sum was £30,000, which he believed was insufficient to include the erection of a railway bridge. That amount was in course of expenditure on the railway from the Thames to the Waikato, as voted by this House.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. HALL.—Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask the indulgence which is usually granted by the House to honorable members who may wish to bring before it any matter affecting their personal character. I have had my attention called to a letter in the *New Zealander* of this day, signed by a person who calls himself "J. C. Brown." Sir, this person makes statements which affect my character, and therefore I trust the House will bear with me for one or two moments. The statements made are two in number. They are statements affecting my character in the discharge of my duties as a Minister of the Crown. The second statement I shall only briefly advert to. It is, that I was a party to sending the Government steamer "Luna" down to Otago to bring up two particular gentlemen to Wellington. I can only say with regard to that, that it is an entire mistake, as any honorable member will find out, on making inquiry, that the steamer on that occasion was sent to Otago to carry back the San Francisco mail, and on returning it is true that she did bring up those gentlemen. That will no doubt be found from an

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examination of the records of the Post Office Department at the time. The other statement is contained in the following paragraph of that letter. This person writes, he is not likely to support a Government with John Hall as Premier.

Mr. BROWN.—Hear, hear.

Mr. HALL.—Well, I can only say that that is a statement which is very satisfactory to John Hall. This person then goes on, "My own experience of a Government of which the leader of the Opposition was a member—I refer to the Vogel-cum-Hall Government of 1872, when that Government was on its last legs, on the eve of the division which brought the Stafford Government into existence—is this: The Hall Government offered to myself anything I chose to name for my vote. My reply was, that I required nothing for myself, but that they should be honest in their dealings." Sir, this is a statement made not in this House. Of course, any statement made by a member in this House affecting my character, or any statement from which I was compelled to differ, I should express my dissent from in the usual parliamentary terms; but this is a statement made by a person in a public newspaper outside the House, and I have the right of characterizing that statement in very plain English. Now, Sir, the gentlemen who were members of the Government with myself at that time were—the late Sir Donald McLean, Mr. Fox, Mr. Julius Vogel, Mr. J. D. Ormond, Mr. William Reeves, the Hon. Henry John Miller, and the Hon. William Giesborne, who is now Minister of Mines. The testimony of Sir Donald McLean cannot now be obtained. The testimony of Sir Julius Vogel and Sir Edward Stafford cannot be obtained soon. The testimony of Mr. Reeves, who was Minister of Works for the Middle Island—with which part of the colony I understand this person is connected—I shall endeavour to obtain with the least possible delay. I have appealed to Mr. Ormond and the Hon. Henry John Miller, and I shall appeal to the Minister of Mines presently. There is no difference whatever in the testimony of those honorable gentlemen. Sir, the statement in the letter is, not that any overtures were made by any one connected with, or on the part of, the Government, but it was by the Hall Government itself; and the evident intention of that statement is to implicate myself, and to bring discredit on myself at the present time. I have now only to ask the House to believe this: that that statement is an absolute, unblushing, and unmitigated falsehood—that there is not one particle of truth in it.

Mr. BROWN.—I think, Sir, I shall claim the privilege of this House—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

Mr. BROWN.—I speak to a point of order. The point of order is this: that the person who is leader of the Opposition refers to a statement which appears in this day's paper as being an unblushing—

Mr. HALL.—An absolute, unblushing, and unmitigated falsehood.

Mr. BROWN.—I, Sir, will give him an opportunity of calling for a Select Committee to prove that every word I have said is true.

Mr. SPEAKER.—What is the point of order?

Mr. BROWN.—The point of order is this: whether the member has a right to designate another member by such a term as he has done?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The question of privilege protecting what a member may say does not extend beyond the words that are used in the course of debate in this House.

Mr. HALL.—Neither myself, nor any members of the then Government to whom I have referred, have the slightest recollection that the name of this person, J. C. Brown, was ever mentioned in the Government. Sir, I have now only to say that I think any further comment on my part is unnecessary. I feel confident that neither myself nor my then colleagues will suffer from any statement made by that person. I will conclude by asking the Minister of Mines whether he has any recollection of the circumstance, and whether he believes that statement I have read to be founded on truth or not.

Mr. GISBORNE.—An appeal has been made to me. I was a member of the Government at the time. I have certainly no knowledge of such an offer having been made as is described in the letter, and I certainly should have been no party myself to making it. I would not consent for a moment to sit in any Ministry which agreed to make an offer of the kind expressed in that letter.

Mr. BROWN.—I think it is necessary that I should say a few words. I say that John Hall was a member of the Government without portfolio at that time; and that he will admit. I challenge that honorable gentleman to call for a Committee of Inquiry, and I will prove there all that has been stated in that letter, and maybe more. The Government, on the occasion referred to, descended to all manner of means for support. They were continually in the lobbies, full of promises. I exonerate my friend the Minister of Mines, Mr. Gisborne; I also exonerate Mr. Hall, he being at the time in the Upper House. If required I will bring positive proof that such offers were made.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Name, name.

Mr. BROWN.—Call for a Committee, and the truth will come out. A great deal more than this was done. Let him call for a Committee: I challenge him to do it.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Name, name!

Mr. BROWN.—I say he was a member of that Government. When I entered Parliament in 1870, he was one of two who introduced me to the Speaker. I was not a supporter of the Vogel Government. He came up to impeach them, and the next session he was in office with them—politically, a Johnny H-all-sorts.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must call on the honorable member for Tuaepeka to withdraw that language. I cannot allow such language to be used here.

Mr. BROWN.—What am I to withdraw?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The very offensive nickname you thought proper to apply to the honorable member for Selwyn.

Mr. BROWN.—If it is necessary to withdraw it, I consent.

Mr. BOWEN.—The honorable gentleman, I understand, was making a personal explanation.

I do not know whether it would be reasonable to ask him why he called the Ministry the Hall Ministry, when he wrote the letter.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think the honorable member for Kaiapoi has a right to interpose in this discussion.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. J. T. FISHER.—Sir, it is not my intention to take up the time of the House to any great extent, but, as a member of the Government having the confidence of the country, it is only right I should say a few words. My honorable friend the leader of the Opposition told me the other day that if his predecessor had had the use of the Government steamers he would have been in the House in my place. Well, Sir, the honorable gentleman and his party did all they could to keep me out of the House; but they could not do it: and I should not have been afraid had that honorable gentleman come down to fight me. I had once the honor of contesting the seat with a first-class knight, and, if he could not beat me, a second-class knight would have had very little chance. Now, in connection with the Opposition, what is the main feature that presents itself? They are a disunited Opposition—I will not say a factious Opposition, but it is rather a near approach to it—an Opposition so disunited that, while they are agreed to turn out the present Government, they were not united enough to choose a leader from amongst themselves. They were obliged to go to the Upper House to select a leader who could carry out their liberal measures. It is a remarkable thing that honorable gentlemen should profess Liberalism, but what most surprises me is that they should have the effrontery to do so, seeing that these gentlemen, though calling themselves Liberals, have never done anything liberal in their lives. I think this is the second time the honorable member for Selwyn has come down from above to take part in the proceedings of this House; and I remember that on one occasion he was very glad to get out of here again, for fear the doors of the place above should for ever be closed against him. I was exceedingly disappointed with his speech the other night. To my mind it was weak in the extreme. I expected something vigorous from the honorable gentleman; but it appears to me that when he jumped into the mantle of his predecessor he found it to be cold and damp, and that that fact had a very depressing effect upon him. The charges he brought forward were very much the same as those brought forward by his predecessor; but I must admit that his attack was not characterized by that coarseness which had marked the speech of the previous leader of the Opposition on a similar occasion. I have always taken a great interest in my honorable friend the honorable member for Selwyn, because we commenced our life in the colony together. However, he soon took to polishing up "the handle of the big front door" of a provincial office in Canterbury, while I remained where I was. By-and-by he was able to make provincial laws, and got so far advanced

as to make them pleasant and beneficial to himself and his friends. He was one of those gentlemen who voted for giving runs to the large squatters, in spite of a protest by a large number of members, which protest still remains on the records of the Provincial Council of Canterbury. This is the honorable gentleman who aspires to lead the Liberal party. Then I remember he started a small local industry in the way of manufacturing those celebrated gridirons, and afterwards went in for the creation of pre-emptive rights—both striking instances of his advanced liberal ideas. I really think the honorable gentleman has made a mistake in coming forward as a Liberal leader. Unfortunately for the country he has never done anything to show that he is liberal; and when, after making use of provincial institutions for a while, he got into the Upper House, he there assisted to kick over the ladder which had done so much for him, and which had been a blessing to the country.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman is mistaken.

Mr. FISHER.—Then I apologize. I was under the impression that he did attempt to kick over provincial institutions. At any rate, he joined the Government which did kick over the old provinces.

Mr. HALL.—I was in England at the time.

Mr. FISHER.—I mean the Stafford Government. It was they who brought in the New Provinces Act, and the Westland County Act, and these Acts were the first blows levelled at the provinces. The honorable gentleman was a member of that Government, as well as of other Governments; and, in fact, he ought to be regarded as a political Vicar of Bray. Now he objects to the Land-Tax Act; but, after the benefit he has derived from the prosecution of public works in the colony, he ought to be one of the last to object to the land-tax. I believe that that tax is one of the best that could have been levied. Surely the large estates that have reaped such immense benefit from the public works of the colony ought to pay their fair share towards meeting the interest on the debt we have incurred thereby; and the honorable gentleman more particularly ought to feel grateful that a line of railway has been run through, or, at any rate, very close to, his estate, and has been of the utmost benefit to him. I will not refer in detail to the various charges that have been brought against the Government; but there are just one or two matters that deserve notice. My honorable friend referred to the "Hinemoa;" but I should like to know who purchased the "Hinemoa." Not this Government, but a prior Government, who purchased her for a yacht; and, if the present Government have used her, it has been for a purpose that the late Government never attempted to use her for. The present Premier has used the "Hinemoa" for the purpose of visiting various parts of the colony, and informing the people of the steps that were intended to be taken for their benefit. The late Government certainly did not do that; and why? Simply because they had no policy, unless you can call their destructiveness a policy—a policy

for destroying the provinces, but not a policy for putting anything in their place.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There is time for that.

Mr. FISHER.—Well, it is time that time arrived. They never cared for using the "Hinemoa." All the "continuous Ministry" cared for was to destroy the provinces, and to take "political rest," with an occasional cruise in the steamer. The steamer has been used for a beneficial purpose since the present Government came into office. The Premier, by using her, has not only been able to do the work of the country, but has mixed among the people, and has been able to learn what the wants of the country are. Another charge that has been made against the Government is, that they have interfered improperly with the Civil Service of the country by putting outsiders into it; but I think the Opposition have only been able to discover one instance. Other Governments have done much worse than that. I remember a Government which made four such appointments, two of the appointees being members of this House at the time. That cannot be done now; but still it should be remembered, that that Government actually appointed two members of Parliament to the Civil Service. I have a strong feeling with regard to the Civil Service of the colony. I think great care ought to be taken that no outsiders are placed in the Service. When persons in the Service are capable of performing the duties required for a particular office, they should be promoted. What chance is there of a good Civil Service, if outside men are to be taken and put above the heads of old Civil servants? I have a strong feeling in the matter, for I once belonged to a class of men who prayed for promotion. Had any one been placed over my head after I had served the two years to entitle me to promotion, I should have felt very much aggrieved; therefore I hold that, if we can find men in the Service capable of doing the work we require, we should not go outside the Service to fill up the vacancies that may occur. Then we had a charge about a clock—that the Premier had for political purposes presented a clock to his Christchurch constituents. Well, Sir, I can only say that the clock had been lying useless in Christchurch for years; and really I cannot see what political dishonesty can be attached to an action of that sort. It is not worth my while to refer to the many other statements that have been made; but I should like to say a few words on the allegations that we have heard regarding immigration. Any gentleman in this House must know what has been going on in the colony of late, and must know that we must deal cautiously with immigration in the present state of affairs. Why, we have now hundreds of men travelling through the country seeking for employment: still, a few months ago we had great pressure put upon us to bring more immigrants out. We know the class from whom that pressure comes; but we do not want to see a lot of men running about the country looking for something to do. There are plenty of men in the colony who object to the present condition of things, and say wages are too high. Those gentlemen would like to see repeated here a state of things in which men get

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but 4s. a day, with work but three days a week, and have to pay 8s. a week out of their earnings to get a miserable two-roomed shanty. I have had practical experience of these things, and I do not wish to see men brought out here to such a life as that. There are now a great many immigrants on their way—some nominated and some paying their own passage—but, in the present state of things, I do not know where they are going to find employment. I suppose the Government will be expected to find them employment. To my mind all the charges that have been made against the Government are very trumpery. They are not statesmanlike, and I certainly did expect something better from the mover. Altogether, I think the House will do well to pause before they affirm such a motion as has been brought by the honorable member for Selwyn.

Mr. MURRAY.—Sir, I do not wish to allow this debate to come to a close without expressing some of the views which I hold with regard to the amendment of the honorable member for Selwyn. I was one of those who did not take any part in the division which resulted in the defeat of the Ministry last session and the consequent dissolution of the House. I failed to see at the time the grounds upon which His Excellency was advised to grant a dissolution. The House had expressed itself as favourable to all the liberal measures which the Government proposed as their political platform. The Electoral Bill was passed by this House and by the other branch of the Legislature in almost the identical form in which it had emanated from the Ministry. We should naturally suppose that that measure was the result of the united wisdom and deep consultation of the honorable gentlemen who occupy those benches; but my own conviction is that it was not so, but that the measure was the result of the labour of an honorable gentleman whom we all regret to see absent from the House—I mean the late Attorney-General, Mr. Stout. When, however, that measure was prepared and placed before this House, it suddenly seemed to occur to one or two gentlemen connected with the Ministry, who were well acquainted with the Native people, and particularly partial to them, that they should confer a special privilege upon the Native race which Europeans do not possess. In fact, following out a peculiar characteristic of the administration of affairs in New Zealand, we were called upon to regard the Maoris as vastly superior to the Europeans. But the Upper House very properly declined to say that the Anglo-Saxon race was inferior to the Maori or any other race. They would not say two Europeans were only as good as one Maori, and therefore they returned the measure to the House in the exact form in which it emanated from the Ministry. The House is consequently not to blame for that measure not being the law of the land now; and on that ground there was no necessity for granting a dissolution. As to the redistribution of seats, I would ask, What has this Ministry done during the years it has been in office? And what did the Ministry who preceded them do? Neither of them made any attempt whatever to

put the representation of the people on a fair basis. The proposal which was placed before Parliament in 1875, and which was passed into law, simply added a few more members, and the result certainly did not go to show that an increase of members tended to the more efficient discharge of public duties. As many honorable gentlemen know, that is a matter in which I myself have taken an active part on several occasions, and have endeavoured to get a fairer distribution of the representation. The late honorable member for Riverton, Dr. Hodgkinson, son, also moved in the same direction; but he could get no response from the honorable gentlemen on the Ministerial benches. It is therefore no fault of this House that that measure has not become law; and, if the House does not fairly represent the population of the country, we are not to blame, but the gentlemen who lead the House. The House last year represented the country just as well as it does now, and consequently that was no fair ground on which to advise His Excellency to grant a dissolution. I do not regard the question of triennial Parliaments as a burning cry, and I told my constituents so. I look upon it as only one of those political cries raised by the Chartists in England years ago, and under entirely different circumstances; and therefore we, in this colony, are called upon to adopt the measure. The Imperial Parliament two hundred years ago tried the system of septennial Parliaments, and have never since seen cause to change it. I say that if a man be returned by a constituency for five years, or even three years, and they see cause for losing confidence in him, they should not be compelled to retain him for even one year. Let us make a fair compromise, and have our Parliaments elected for four years instead of five, if you think that too long, but leave it open to any constituency to sign a petition and send it to you, Sir, as soon as their representative has lost their confidence; and you should there and then be compelled to issue a new writ, so that no constituency might necessarily be misrepresented for more than one year. On these grounds I see no reason why the country should have been put to an expense of at least £100,000 by the last elections; why the constituents should have been put to all this trouble at the most inconvenient season of the year—they should have been taken away from the useful employment of putting seed into the ground merely to play at politics. And all this was done purely on personal grounds. Who opposed the measures of those honorable gentlemen? Nobody. The question that was sent to the country was simply whether two or three gentlemen whom the House had by a large majority declared to be unfit to govern the country were still to remain on those benches. This action of His Excellency—and I say it with all respect—appears to me to have put the House in this position as a precedent for all future time: that it must submit to the grossest misgovernment; or, if it does not, a Ministry can say, "We will put the country to an expense of at least £100,000 by advising the Governor to grant a dissolution." That is the effect of granting a

dissolution, not on a policy, but on the question of whether gentlemen who have lost the confidence of the House are to remain on the Ministerial benches. Having made these remarks on the policy of the Government and on the question of dissolution, I will now turn to the question immediately before the House—namely, His Excellency's Speech. His Excellency says, "It is matter for congratulation that, notwithstanding the severe monetary pressure and commercial gloom which have for some time past prevailed throughout the world, the position of this colony is thoroughly sound." We are asked to affirm that proposition without any information being laid before us. Where is the Financial Statement? Where is the information we ought to have as to the financial condition of the country when we are asked to affirm such a proposition as that? I will state a few facts which I have collated, notwithstanding the reticence as to financial matters of the honorable gentleman who occupies the position of Colonial Treasurer at the present time. I find that the bank returns show that the advances made during the year 1878 amounted to £12,633,497, and for the year ending 30th June last £14,017,707, showing an increased indebtedness to the banks of £1,384,210. The mortgage indebtedness of the colony to the commencement of the year 1878 was £14,065,351; the mortgages during the year 1878 amounted to £7,872,821, and the releases to £2,720,297, showing an increase to the amount of the mortgage indebtedness of £5,152,524, and making the amount of mortgages up to the end of 1878 £19,217,875. Taking the mortgages for the present year at the same rate they would amount to date to £3,600,000, making the private mortgages at the present time £22,817,875. I have not been able to arrive at an exact estimate of the indebtedness of local bodies, but I think it may be fairly estimated at about £2,000,000. Adding these to the bank advances, we have a total indebtedness in these respects of £38,835,582. The public debt of the colony at the present time is £23,222,311. Add to this the new £5,000,000 loan, and we have a total private and public debt of £67,057,893, from which deduct the Sinking Fund Account, £1,709,007, and we find that the debts of New Zealand to internal and external creditors amount to £65,348,886. I challenge any of the honorable gentlemen on those benches to disprove my figures. This is not all due to external creditors, a considerable amount being represented by creditors in the colony, and by depositors in the banks; but, taking a fair estimate—and I am borne out in it by gentlemen of considerable acquaintance with such subjects, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse amongst others—I believe the total yearly debt-charge for public and private debts due to external creditors amounts to upwards of £3,000,000. So that we have to send out as a tribute to the foreign capitalist more than the whole value of our wool exports. Taking, now, the import and export returns, I find them in the same unsatisfactory condition. In 1871 the value of our exports was £5,282,084, and in 1878 £5,192,487, or a decrease of £90,597. My figures as regards the exports for the present year do not

agree with those of the Government, because they estimate the whole of the wool exported at 1s. 1½d. a pound, whereas I estimate it at 10d. That is about the net price to the people of New Zealand, after deducting freight and all charges. I am sure honorable members who know anything of the subject will agree that my estimate of 10d. a pound in the colony is a high estimate, and shows that the Government have over-estimated the value of our wool exports for last year by £823,213. Our imports for 1878 amounted to £3,755,667; and, if we deduct the value of the exports from that, it leaves £3,563,180 as the excess of our imports over exports. We have to meet this in some way, and we have also to meet the charge on our public debt outside the colony, so that there is a deficiency of £8,563,180, to be met either by introducing foreign capital or increasing our public debt. These figures will, I think, show us that there are some grounds for apprehension, and that the financial condition of the colony is not in so satisfactory a condition as His Excellency's Advisers would lead the House to suppose. When we have these facts staring us in the face—these enormous liabilities which the colony has to meet—it appears to me to be trifling with the matter to be talking about great constitutional questions, and about future generations in the colony. What we have to do is to set ourselves to work to consider gravely the present condition of the colony, how we are to bring in foreign capital to assist us, how we are to provide for the unemployed and for those who are in distress and destitution; and not to talk about bringing up our children to be statesmen, and about the poverty and misery in which people live at Home, or of the grinding rapacity of the rich there. We have nothing to do with them. What we want to do is to pass such liberal measures as will induce foreign capital to come here. Now, what has the Government done to carry out such a proposal as that? Who was it raised the price of land in New Zealand? Who was it compelled the deferred-payment settler to pay £3 an acre for his land? Who was it sold the deferred-payment land by auction, and in some instances compelled the struggling settler, whose cause they championed, to pay £17 10s. an acre for it? Not to pay it—for of course they could not; and in two years' time many of those industrious men who had saved up a few hundred pounds and taken up locations, were forced by this auction system to pay enormous prices, and now they are penniless. They have lost the labour of years, their savings have gone, and they must go forth to seek employment and begin the world anew; and this is owing to the Government who claim a desire to settle the working-men upon the land of New Zealand. As foreign countries have been referred to, I may perhaps be allowed to allude to the position of the French agriculturists; and it is a matter of importance for us to consider the position they occupy, as it has been frequently referred to by other speakers, both in the House and outside. I find that in France there are no less than 4,000,000 freeholders, and that 4,500,000 of the French people hold the French *rentes*, whereas in England only 238,000 of the

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people hold the national debt. Now, this comparison is very suggestive, and is one which we should do well to consider in shaping our land regulations and our system of government; because it appears to me that if in England, with the system of taxation spreading over the whole community, the national debt is held by such a small number of people, the tendency must be to increase the disparity between the rich and the poor. And if in England the position is unsatisfactory with regard to the taxation going into the hands of a few consol-holders, how much more unsatisfactory must it become in New Zealand, where the whole of the charges on account of the public debt do not return to fertilize the soil and enrich the people, but leave the colony as tribute to foreign bondholders! These are reasons why we should be particularly careful in the administration of the public funds of the colony. It was hoped that when the Premier took office he would restore the finances of New Zealand to a satisfactory condition, and we were told that he intended to reduce the estimates by a very large amount. I remember him saying that he would go into that room and in half-an-hour reduce the estimates by £100,000. Well, that has not been done. We were told that one of the Government steamers was to be sold. The Ministerial residences were to be disposed of. The honorable member for Tuaepeka has ceased expressing his virtuous indignation against those Ministerial residences which he used to object to so much when they were occupied by the previous Government. Why are not those motions regarding the sale of the Ministerial residences now placed on the Order Paper? Then we were told that there was to be a wonderful change in the administration of Native affairs. Now, I will just read what the Premier said on that point:—

“With regard to the Native lands, we propose at once to withdraw the Native Land Sales Suspension Bill. I find, on consultation with my colleagues, that they agree in the pretty general opinion that this measure is not popular with the Native race, and not likely, in its present form, to produce the advantages that were expected from it. But we find that really all necessary powers are conferred upon us by ‘The Native Lands Act, 1873.’”

And then he goes on to say,—

“Generally, with regard to the Native race, the House may depend upon this: that our policy will be one of continued amalgamation, of instruction of the Native race, of an attempt to encourage the most friendly relations with them. I hope that, our acquaintance with the Native race being now so large, our dealings with them having existed for so many years, a policy such as I have stated may be greatly successful. Of this I am sure—the fact of my having to aid me as a colleague a gentleman born in New Zealand, knowing the Natives from his childhood, and much regarded and esteemed by them, will be to me an advantage such as could not have been enjoyed by a Ministry in New Zealand at an earlier period of its history, because no person so born, so educated, and with such a knowledge of the

feelings of the Native race, was then to be found in this country.”

That is the very high character which was given to the present Native Minister. Therefore, if the Ministry have failed in their management of Native affairs, it must have been through their own fault, acting as they did under such very advantageous circumstances. Here is what Mr. Sheehan then said:—

“Apart from the fact that the chance of a Native outbreak is something below zero, all the evidence points in the direction that we need not any further dread a Native war. We know that the Natives themselves wish to be reconciled to their European friends, and that they are desirous of becoming amenable to the law. They are settling down into steady habits, and the King Natives have invited to live amongst them a large number of the most loyal Natives in the colony—I mean the people of whom Te Wheoro is a leading chief. There is another reason why I think we may dismiss from our minds the idea that there is any possibility of a Native outbreak, and that is that the King country is split into two parts.”

I hope honorable members will remark this, because it has been claimed by the present Ministry that they have detached Rewi from the King. But this was during the session of 1877, when the Ministry had only been a few days in office:—

“On the one side we have the King and his party, and on the other side we have Rewi and his party; and I do not think they would unite again to wage war with the Europeans.”

Therefore the great card in the Ministerial game, Rewi, was detached from the King before they had assumed the reins of government; and all these stories we have heard about Rewi coming to us with an offer to make a railway are simply sham and bunkum, and are only used as a means of misleading the southern members, who do not know anything about Native matters. Those gentlemen who represent the part of the country more immediately affected, and who have stood by it resolutely, are those who disbelieve in the Rewi craze. We were told that Rewi was to give land to make a railway from Taranaki to Waikato. Now, I have been making inquiries about this, and I understand that Rewi has not ten thousand acres of his own to give, instead of five million acres. The whole of his hapu only own 140,000 acres, and where, therefore, are the five millions which he is to give to make the railway? Mr. Sheehan goes on to say,—

“It is just as well that we should know this, because there is nothing that could do more harm to the colony than to have the impression go abroad that there was any danger of another Native war. We must remember that our public works policy is unfinished, and, if that policy is to be made the success which its promoters intended it to be, it will be necessary to show to the money-lender in England that the borrowed money will not have to be spent in putting down Native outbreaks, but in carrying on the public works which have already been undertaken. I look upon the money which has already been spent in putting

down Native outbreaks in the light of money thrown away."

And in this I quite agree with Mr. Sheehan. But what does he propose to do? To spend £360,000 out of the five-million loan for the very purpose against which he expressed himself so strongly. Well, Sir, that was the manifesto delivered when the Ministry came into power. When they again met the House we were treated to the following passage in His Excellency's Address:—

"I congratulate you on the fact that peaceful relations have at last been established with the Waikato and Ngatimaniapoto tribes. Complying with the pressing and frequently-received invitations of the leading chiefs of those tribes, the Premier and the Native Minister visited them on several occasions in their own districts, and met them also at the Waitara. Papers on this subject will be laid before you. They will show that the long period of serious difficulties with the Native race may reasonably be considered to be approaching a termination. There is now a fair prospect that before long European enterprise and settlement will be welcomed by those great tribes, and that they will gladly avail themselves of the advantages which roads, railways, and telegraphs will bring to their magnificent territory, by which its value, and consequently the wealth and happiness of that portion of the Native race, so long estranged from us, must be largely increased."

And the Governor then went on to the probable construction of a railway from Auckland to Taranaki. The extracts I have read will show the difference between the promises of the Government and what they expected. And what is now the state of Native affairs? In the West it now depends upon the caprice or fanaticism of one man whether or not this colony shall be plunged into a Native war. In the North we find that loyal Natives are in civil discord, which has resulted in the loss of more than one life. We find that surveyors have been shot at the Thames—a place which I know something about; and I think I know the man who was shot; and I may say that this unfortunate occurrence could only have resulted from the grossest contempt on the part of the Maoris for the Government—a contempt which has arisen in consequence of Ministers demeaning themselves and humiliating the colony by grovelling before rebel Natives. It is not sufficient that Her Majesty's Ministers should do honor to rebels, but even His Excellency himself was taken to do honor to Rewi, and to escort him to his home. Troops who have always been ready to defend the colony, and who are prepared at the present time to defend it, were demeaned by having to present arms to a man who had never surrendered to the Queen's authority. This has had a most pernicious effect amongst those Natives who have been loyal and faithful to the Government. What encouragement is it for those Natives to continue loyal, when they are left out in the cold, and see the Government cringing and humiliating themselves before rebels? Now, Sir, I will refer to the land question. His Excellency's Speech says, "A Bill will be submitted for your consideration to suspend plurality of

voting in cases of elections of local governing bodies, whilst those bodies are subsidized out of the general revenue of the colony." The Premier told the electors in Auckland that he would not rest satisfied so long as one part of the colony was enjoying affluence and another part was sunk in poverty and destitution, while the public estate which belonged to the colony as a whole was available. We took away the public estates from Otago and Canterbury and made them colonial, but left 20 per cent. as an endowment to the local bodies. His proposal is, under the specious pretence of abolishing plural voting, now to take away that 20 per cent. from the local bodies unless they will agree to submit to a great wrong. Local representation is different altogether from the question of the representation of the people; it is a question of business, and plural voting in the case of the local bodies is perfectly justifiable. The representation of the country is an entirely different matter. Every man who is sane, who is not a drunkard, who is not a criminal, should have equal voting power, because, after all, the laws are only contracts, and only those who are parties to those contracts should be bound by them. And I go further. I agree with the honorable member for Grey and Bell, who is an honor to this House, and a credit to the constituency that returned him, that female suffrage should be adopted in this colony; and if he will bring forward that proposal he shall have my support. I shall now sum up a few of the charges I have to bring against the Ministry, and in doing so I wish to say that my opposition does not extend to the Ministry as a whole. There are gentlemen on those benches who have been my loyal allies in former fights in this House, and I regret that they should have to be judged by the company they keep. I hope that in any change we may make we shall not consider merely personal issues; but I must say that it is not altogether a question of public policy that is now dividing the House—it is a question whether certain gentlemen are capable of conducting the business of the country. In our own private affairs, if we have any particular business to do, we get the best men we can to do it. If we want a lawyer to conduct our business, we employ the most able man we can get; in short, in all branches of business we look for the most trusted, the most capable men; and now that we have these large liberal measures to pass through the Legislature, and various large financial proposals to discuss, we want to have capable men on the Ministerial benches, and not men who have proved themselves to be untrustworthy. In regard to financial reform, the Government have utterly failed. They have confiscated the Land Fund of Otago and Canterbury; they have largely increased the taxation of the colony; they have raised the price of land, and thereby discouraged capital and settlement; and they talk of bursting up the estates of the 414,000 Europeans, who have paid £12,000,000 for 14,000,000 acres of land, while 40,000 Maoris are encouraged to hold 20,000,000 acres unimproved and untaxed. Does not this show special favour? Then, again, it is said the laws of entail and primogeniture

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must be abolished, and the estates of Europeans be subdivided; but we hear nothing of applying this principle to the vastly greater Maori estates. I need not refer to the promises of the Government to sell the Ministerial residences and the State yachts, or to the proposal to reduce their own salaries. None of these things were done; but they are comparatively trivial matters. But this is the Ministry which increased the honorarium to £210; the Premier now proposes to give salaries to members; and would it not be an ungrateful House that would vote against such a Premier as that? What is to be the salary? Perhaps £500 a year; and what does that mean? An expenditure of about £60,000 a year, which I maintain would be much better spent upon reproductive improvements than in bringing men here to talk politics. Then, again, the Government have used the Legislative Council, the Bench, the magistracy, the public service, and the public property in an unusual and inexcusable manner for party purposes. The Legislative Council has been a credit to this country; but previous Governments, seeing that it was necessary to bring that body more into accordance with liberal institutions, refused to make any further appointments to that House, in order to make the change more easy, but this Government has made a vast number of appointments of a character which I think will not tend to perpetuate the existence of an Upper House. Now the question arises, What change shall be made in the constitution of the Legislative Council?—for the appointments made by the present Government show that a change is necessary. We cannot permit the other branch of the Legislature to be transformed into a sort of museum, to which members are to be sent as a reward for political services. In New South Wales the nominative system is in force; in Victoria the elective system prevails; but neither seems to be thoroughly successful, and it is necessary that some other system should be adopted, and on a future occasion I shall take an opportunity to explain my views upon that point. Then I have another complaint to urge against the Government. They pledged themselves to introduce a Drainage Bill, which is a measure of considerable importance as affecting my own and many other districts in the colony, where its advantages are understood. But, though they did not introduce the Drainage Bill, they did reduce the duty upon sugar, without conferring any practical benefit upon the general consumer. A merchant told me that the general public was not benefited at all, but that the brewers were benefited, for they now largely used sugar instead of malt. But let us look at the matter in another way. The importations of sugar into New Zealand amount to £500,000 per annum, and if inducements were held out for the establishment of sugar factories here we should save a large portion of that amount. As it is, the Government have reduced the duty and lost £100,000. We cannot afford to dispense with our revenue in this way, unless new gold fields are discovered in some parts of the colony; and the next best thing

to do is to encourage local industries and save the money of the colony in that way. In France, the production of beet-root sugar amounts to about £10,000,000 sterling annually; the French producers are now sending sugar into England in large quantities; and if we could establish such an industry in New Zealand it would not only be the means of settling down a valuable class of agricultural settlers, but it would save a great amount of money which is sent out of the colony at the present time. I am afraid the Government, by their "liberal" measures, are inflicting serious injury upon the colony. Instead of their Native policy being successful, the so-called Maori King, who previously had very humble pretensions, now claims that the whole of New Zealand is under his sovereignty. Then there is another matter that demands notice. The Premier, I regret to see, has been using his position in a manner which I consider altogether unconstitutional, and unworthy of his antecedents, to raise class feeling throughout the country. During the last want-of-confidence discussion in this House a public meeting was convened in this city, with the object of intimidating the Parliament. That in itself ought to stamp any man as not being the friend of free institutions. Then there is the railway from the Waikato to the Thames, which was to assist in extending the railway system of New Zealand, and, by tapping the navigation of the Thames River at Te Aroha, give the benefit of railway communication to the inhabitants of the Thames Valley and the people at Grahamstown; but, instead of this, the Premier went down to the Hauraki Gulf, and turned the first sod of a railway which was of little advantage to the district. He spent something like £67,000, and it is probable that the £168,000 mentioned in the Public Works Statement, to complete the authorized line of thirty miles from Waikato to Te Aroha, will be swallowed up in this one portion; and when they arrive at Te Aroha there will be a blank of thirty miles between Waikato and the Thames which will not be filled up—the district will not have the advantages of railway communication with our railway system, while the railway constructed will run parallel with the Thames—a fine, navigable river. If the railway between the Waikato and the Thames is found to succeed, this House would probably have to extend the line to Shortland and Grahamstown; but that is a matter for future consideration. However, I must say that the gentlemen who would do these things are utterly unworthy of the confidence of this House. I need not refer to the conduct of the Premier in regard to the Land Act—other members have spoken of that matter; but, when I first heard of it, it appeared to me to resemble the trick of the Heathen Chinese who shoved the "right bower" up his sleeve. Now, no one can approve of such acts. What should I say if I sent a clerk to the Bank with a number of cheques, and found him slipping one up his sleeve? Many years ago, when we were fighting against the squatting interest of Otago, my honorable friend the member for Port Chalmers knows well that he was returned with my assistance to defeat schemes

for locking up the lands in the hands of the squatters, and that the Governor at the time did not see fit to exercise the privilege which he undoubtedly possessed of disallowing those Bills. He prefers, when Governor of the country by the will of the people, to act in an unconstitutional manner and try to prevent a Bill becoming law which was the property of both Houses of Parliament, and which he was constitutionally bound to see carried into effect, even supposing he did not approve of it, although, as was the case, it had been passed by his own Government. The Premier also claims to have conferred on the people of New Zealand the priceless boon of free education. How did the Premier confer that boon? Was it by taxation on the Island of Kawau? No. It was conferred by means of the taxation of the whole people of New Zealand: free education of which a large and important section in this community cannot, from conscientious convictions, avail themselves—free education for which all have to pay, but of which only a portion can avail themselves. Now, the plurality of voting is another objection. I have heard that the Government do not intend to press their measure to abolish that: but, if they do not intend to press it, why bring it forward? I say, with Cromwell, we should never engage in battle unless we are determined to press on to victory. If a man does not intend to fight to the bitter end, it only weakens his prestige and influence to engage in battle; and the Government ought not to have placed that paragraph in His Excellency's mouth as part of their proposals. With regard to changes in our system of government, I would say it is not well that we should be continually altering our forms of administration. The welfare of the country is more dependent upon good management than upon continued alteration of the character of its institutions. I opposed the abolition of provinces altogether for that reason, and I think the present Government are now acting in an injudicious manner in trying to stir up class feelings. In saying the present Government, I exclude my friends from Otago and Canterbury. Our endeavour ought to be rather to try to stir up a feeling of generous emulation among the inhabitants of New Zealand to press forward as a united people to fulfil the destinies of a great nation, avoiding class distinctions or party animosities. In the words of Tennyson, let us

Ring out a slowly-dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

While I hope that, in this new House, we shall have a better state of feeling than appeared to characterize us in the last Parliament, I regret that many of my old friends and some of my opponents, who were an honor to this House, should now be absent. But I am proud to see that the electors of New Zealand have been determined that there should not be all loss as the result of the general election, and have succeeded in returning many men who, I trust, will be faithful to their pledges, and honest to the people of New Zealand. I would suggest to them all that we should en-

deavour to encourage capital to come amongst us—that we should not, by indiscreet utterances, attempt to drive it away. The Premier, in his speech at Dunedin, said we did not want capital. He said, "Let them take away their capital, and leave us the land." But I ask, what would a man do with fifty acres of land which he would have to cultivate by scratching it with his finger-nails? But give him a plough and a horse by means of capital, and you will soon see a very different result. With regard to immigration, I have read the speeches of the Premier and of the Minister for Public Works. Now, you have all heard what the Premier said with regard to the wickedness of the landowners of New Zealand in trying to bring into the country a lot of men to starve. But what does the Minister for Public Works say?—

"We are told now that there is not sufficient employment in the colony for those whom we have got in it. Well, gentlemen, when I came here, nearly thirty years ago, just exactly the same story was told. I found that immigration was suspended. There was little or no employment at that time: in fact, men were glad to work for 3s. or 3s. 6d. a day. I have no doubt there are some here to-night who can bear me out in my statement. What is more, gentlemen, I am happy to be able to point out scores of people who are now very wealthy men in the province, and the foundation of it was that 3s. 6d. per day. I should like to know where the colony would have been had it not been for immigration then. Why, it was the resumption of immigration which led to increased employment and increased wages. I am persuaded, gentlemen, for my own part, that the same principle should hold good still. If this colony is to prosper, its population must be greatly increased, and the more people we have in the country the better it will be for all. (Cries of 'Oh!') That is my opinion. (Applause.) New Zealand is now, comparatively speaking, a wilderness; and, instead of supporting 400,000 people, I believe it will take many millions of people to beneficially occupy this country. I am more than amazed to hear men trying to woo the electors by decrying immigration. Whilst pandering, as they think, to the prejudices of working-men, they are, in reality, no friends of the working-man."

That is the speech of a statesman and of a man who understands the requirements of New Zealand, and I leave these eloquent words of my honorable friend to answer his chief. My honorable friend the member for Newton, in dealing with this question of immigration, made a most generous and liberal offer to give any man a farm to live upon, and the honorable member will be able to say whether any one responded to that generous offer. In Auckland a homestead law is in force, and the Government may give the land away there for nothing. I do not know what has been done in that direction; but it appears to me that, in dealing with the land, there should be one law all over the colony. Land should not be given away for nothing in Auckland, and in the South be sold at a very high price. In the South we could

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afford to give a high price, because the system which prevailed there was that a large proportion of the money should go back to the land in the shape of roads and other public works. In dealing with the land question we need not be guided by English precedent alone; we may go back still further in history, to a state of affairs more analogous to the position of New Zealand than in England—when the feudal laws still influenced landed estates. In ancient Rome, referring to the Licinian agrarian laws, Livy says,—

“The greater part of the public domains had been let out to nobles and powerful citizens at nominal rents, and were cultivated by slaves. Instead of farmers and yeomen to constitute an agricultural middle class, the bailiff of the absentee landlord drove slaves into the field to till the soil. The harvest was gathered in due season; but its profits left no trace of wealth where it had grown.”

We must avoid the same evil in New Zealand. We must try to encourage resident proprietors and avoid absenteeism. If we get resident proprietors—not men who have acquired large estates of a hundred thousand acres under Sir George Grey's land regulations, but men who have sufficient to keep them in comfort, with holdings not too small like those of the French “habitans” of Canada, who starve upon holdings infinitesimally subdivided—if we do this, and if we secure wisdom in the administration of affairs, I believe that, notwithstanding the large amount of our debt, New Zealand will be in a sound condition. But I feel that, so long as we have got a Government as at present constituted, there is no hope for such a state of things. Therefore, however painful it may be to vote against friends, I am bound to vote according to my convictions. On this occasion I shall not walk out of the House, but I shall vote against the Ministry as at present constituted.

Mr. BARRON.—Sir, I should not have taken this opportunity of addressing the House had it not been that it seems customary for new members to give some reason for the manner in which they are about to record their votes upon so momentous a question as that now before us. I would rather have the reputation in this House of a useful worker than of a persistent talker. Still, it is a very great pleasure indeed to be able to lay before the House the reasons which actuate me in the vote I propose to give on this question. When before my constituents, I disclaimed entirely being considered a party man—as being considered one of those who will vote straight with the party, and ask no questions. I lay claim to independence of action in every respect. There is probably no member of the House who is freer from the trammels of promises or the trammels of party than I am. Still, it will cause me very great pain indeed should the present amendment be carried. It would be a pity, for instance, to spoil an excellent Opposition by converting them into a bad Government. To secure both sides of all questions being properly represented, it is highly necessary that we should encourage a good Opposition. I

do not know what is the experience of older members, but I have a high opinion of some of the gentlemen who constitute the Opposition. They are, in many respects, just in their proper places. If we retain them in opposition, we shall probably have a far closer and keener criticism of the actions of the Government than if we allow them to succeed in the strong efforts they are now making. They have many excellent qualities. They seem to possess a quality which we always admire—to go straight. We have been given an opportunity of judging how straight they can go by the straight course they have taken for the Treasury benches. Probably, in all other actions they may take, they will be equally actuated by a desire to go straight. No doubt they are justified in taking a straight rather than a devious course in order to acquire what they have evidently set their minds upon. It must be the effort of members on this side of the House to keep them from altogether succeeding. We should remember the historical donkey-boy, who had an animal which worked faithfully so long as he was prudent enough to keep a carrot dangling before its nose, just out of reach of its mouth. But, in a moment of weakness which did much more credit to his heart than his head, he allowed the donkey to get a nibble at the carrot. At once the carrot was gone, and the donkey was demoralized. The “fierce light which beats upon the Throne,” according to the poet, is much like that which a well-organized Opposition directs on the actions of a Ministry. The illumination is always intense; it is always capable of picking out any little spots. We have seen here that it has discovered some spots—probably a little shady in themselves, but which have been blackened by the Opposition. However objectionable any Government may be, it should not be displaced unless it is proposed to place in its stead men who have the confidence of the country, and who are more likely to introduce and give effect to measures which have the approval of the country. The result of an appeal to the country has shown that the present Government has its confidence, because more Opposition members of the last Parliament than the fourteen who constituted the majority that succeeded in carrying an adverse vote have offered themselves to their constituencies for re-election and have been rejected. A great many well-known gentlemen who have achieved a political reputation, who have been for many years in this House, have failed to be returned to this Parliament. When we remember that during the last session, on a question similar to the one we are now considering, a majority of fourteen voted with the Opposition, and when we consider that, in the Parliament as it is now constituted, not only is there no majority with the Opposition, but that probably there will be a majority for the Government, we must accept such undoubted proof that the feeling of the country is entirely with the present Government. I have to-day looked over the division list on the no-confidence motion of last session, as recorded in *Hansard*, and, with the permission of the House, I should like

to have an opportunity, although I may probably infringe the rules of debate, to point out the results that list clearly shows when analyzed. I will take, first, the list of those who voted with the "Ayes" against the Government on exactly the same issue as that now before the House. This shows the Government to have gained an extraordinary victory, when you consider that the well-known character and public services of each of those men gave them an immense advantage over any one new to political life who sought to oppose them. Amongst those members who voted against the Government we find Mr. Baigent. Well, he seems to have retired from political life, and another gentleman has been elected in his stead who is going to support the Government. I do not know that Mr. Baigent had entirely forfeited the confidence of his constituents; but, had he stood for election again, it is not at all likely that he would have been returned. Then, we find Mr. Barff in the same position. He was claimed by the Opposition, and his rejection is a victory to the Government. Mr. Curtis was in the Opposition, and he was not returned. Mr. Cutten is also in the same category. Sir Robert Douglas was also claimed by the Opposition. Mr. Fitzroy retired, and did not attempt to offer himself for re-election. Mr. Green was defeated by a gentleman who now graces the Treasury benches. Mr. Hobbs was beaten by Mr. Harris. Mr. Hart was beaten by Mr. Wright, who no doubt acquired a very great deal of prestige from the fact that he declared himself to be an independent Liberal. Well, Dr. Henry, no doubt, would be claimed as an Opposition member. Mr. Hunter was not returned again. The defeat of Mr. Macfarlane is no doubt a victory for our side. Mr. Moorhouse apparently had no chance for Christchurch, and, thinking discretion the better part of valour, he left the field to his opponents and went to the Ashley District. That gentleman's name is a household word in Canterbury, and it would be a pity if any constituency there refused to return him. Captain Morris was defeated, also Mr. Murray-Aynsley; and Mr. Richardson failed to be returned again. Mr. Rowe had no support, when proposing to stand, sufficient to justify him in entering upon a contest, and he also retired. Mr. Tawiti, Mr. Whitaker, and Mr. Williams were not again elected. Mr. Woolcock had no qualification. I cannot tell whether he would have been re-elected by the same constituency, but probably it was a lucky thing for him that he had no qualification. Mr. Fox was defeated, and his defeat is, undoubtedly, a victory for the Government. This exhausts the names of those members who sat in the last Parliament, and who voted in favour of the no-confidence motion. Now, I will take the other side—those members who voted with the Government on that occasion and who do not now hold seats in this House. Mr. Barton did not offer himself for re-election. He probably would have been elected had he done so. Mr. Carrington was opposed by Colonel Trimble, who is also an independent Liberal.

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should have said, did not offer himself for re-election. Mr. Feldwick was beaten by Mr. Bain, and his defeat is undoubtedly a victory for the Opposition. We will allow the Opposition to claim that victory, as Mr. Feldwick was beaten by five or six votes only. Mr. Manders was opposed and fairly beaten by a gentleman who, I am happy to say, has taken the proper side in politics, and who will vote with the Government. Mr. Nahe did not offer himself for re-election. Mr. Rees was disqualified, owing to an alleged informal registration paper; but I have no doubt he would otherwise have been again returned to this House. Mr. Seaton, owing to ill-health, did not seek again to be returned to Parliament. The result of the election for that seat may be claimed as a victory for the Government, as Mr. Cutten, one of the Opposition candidates, was defeated by myself. The electors of the Taieri District returned Mr. Fulton—a gentleman who is very much liked, and who is so greatly respected that there is not the slightest doubt he would have been returned by the Taieri people, no matter what side in politics he represented. They desired to be represented by a local man, and he is a local man in every respect. They had not many eligible local men in the district, and they found one in Mr. Fulton. Therefore I do not give him as a victory to the Opposition, although he will no doubt vote with them. Mr. Goldie did not offer himself for re-election. Dr. Hodgkinson was beaten by Mr. McCaughan. He was beaten by that gentleman, because Mr. McCaughan took up the other political side. Mr. McCaughan contested the election, not as an independent Liberal, but as a supporter of the present Government. There is no doubt that Dr. Hodgkinson was beaten by one who ostensibly led his constituents to suppose that he would vote with the Government. How he will vote is left to be settled between his own conscience and his constituents. Mr. Jackson was beaten by Mr. Mason, and Mr. Joyce by Mr. Henry Hirst. Mr. Masters was also returned by his constituents on the clear understanding that he would support the present Government. I think honorable members on both sides of the House will agree with me that the Government have gained an immense victory, when we consider the state of parties before the Government appealed to the country, and the state of parties on both sides of the House now. I do not know that it is necessary for me to say very much more about the state of parties in the House, but I should like to have the opportunity of saying a word or two about the opinion of the country, and about those gentlemen who wish to carry the measures which the Government claim the credit of putting before the country. The principal measures embodied in the policy of the Government, as stated in the Governor's Speech, have undoubtedly been approved by the country. The recent elections have given an emphatic declaration on that point. We must admit that the party who have initiated these measures are much more likely to bring them fairly before the House and pass them into law than are the members of the Opposition. It is

not necessary to refer to the text-book of the Opposition members—the Biglow Papers—to prove this. I will refer briefly to some remarks which were made by the honorable member the leader of the Opposition when he stated that he did not believe much in triennial Parliaments. He said that the present duration of Parliament was long enough and short enough. The honorable gentleman said he was perfectly willing to make a compromise—that he was quite prepared to consent to Parliaments having four years' duration as a substitute for triennial Parliaments. I understood that that was what the honorable gentleman stated. However, it may be of little consequence. The members of the Opposition can scarcely be considered as being exactly in earnest when they propose to carry the measures which have been brought down by the Government. Their whole political experience and our personal knowledge of their character convince almost every member of this House that the carrying of these measures must put a strain upon the consciences of those honorable gentlemen which they are scarcely able to bear. I have always admired very much the elasticity of that wonderful appliance—the human conscience; but a little experience of parliamentary life has convinced me that it is capable of bearing a far greater strain than ever I thought it was capable of bearing; and it may enable those honorable gentlemen to secure seats on the Treasury benches under the promise that they will carry those measures into law. But, so surely as those gentlemen get on those benches, so surely shall we find that for some reason or other they have had to change entirely the whole policy now before the country, and will not pass those measures on which the Government have obtained the approval of the country. If we were to throw down the challenge to both the Government and the Opposition to at once pass these measures—to affirm the principle of triennial Parliaments, to readjust the boundaries of electoral districts, to place the franchise on the basis it is proposed by the present Government to place it—and then go to the country, there is not the slightest doubt what the verdict of the country would be. Give us an extension of the franchise as proposed by the Government, and give us a greater number of polling-places, so that the polling will not fall comparatively into the hands of the wealthy classes, as now. The polling-hours are not such as to meet the case of workmen who are not independent in circumstances. These men are practically shut out from recording their votes. No conveniences sufficient are afforded them for that purpose. If you will extend those hours to ten at night, and open the booths early in the morning—say at seven o'clock—and if you make the polling-booths more numerous, you will meet the requirements of the working-men. Make every schoolhouse a polling-booth: schoolhouses are generally in the centres of population, and would therefore be most convenient places. Do all these things, and then, if both sides agree to go to the country, we shall have a Parliament sent up here which will give no uncertain sound as to which side it supports. There will then

be no necessity for shepherding one vote. But until both sides make up their minds to do that, we must be met with difficulties almost every day in this House. Parties are too evenly balanced, and they do not now represent the opinion of the country. I hope both sides of the House will see it to be their duty at once to agree to pass these measures, then go to the country, and afterwards come back prepared to do the work of the country in an efficient and straightforward manner.

Mr. MASTERS.—Mr. Speaker, I did not rise for the purpose of making a speech at the present time, but simply to deny the assertions made by the honorable member who has just sat down. He states that I was distinctly returned by my constituents upon the understanding that I was to support the Grey Ministry. To this statement I give the most positive denial. As all sorts of rumours have been going about lately, I will read to the House what I am reported to have said in my address:—

“To the electors of Grey Valley.—Gentlemen, —As I am afraid it will be impossible for me to visit all the centres of population in this electorate, I take this means of communicating my views. I shall support the Grey Ministry so long as I have reason to think it is their intention to honestly carry out the principal public works promised by them, and absolutely necessary for the prosperity and actual vitality of the Grey Valley.”

This is correct. This is a portion of a printed address which I published in the early part of my canvass. I had a very large district, containing about twenty polling-places, and I was very much afraid that I should not be able to address all those centres of population. That was the reason why this address was published. Being called upon so suddenly, I am not prepared to refer to other papers containing reports, but I know generally what they say. I addressed all the principal centres of population in my electorate, and nearly all the smaller ones. The constituents of those districts whom I did not address know me perfectly well, and have sufficient confidence in me to trust me to represent them. In all those centres where I addressed the electors, I stated my sentiments in as clear and honest a manner as any candidate could do. I gave no uncertain sound. I did not lead my constituents to believe that I was a supporter of the Grey Ministry, but I honestly admit that I did lean that way to a certain extent. I commenced every address in this way: “I come before you as an independent candidate. By this I mean I decline to go into the House pledged to support any man or body of men.” I said, “This is one of the largest constituencies in New Zealand, and it would be beneath the dignity of any such constituency to return men pledged to any particular man or body of men.” I said, “If I am returned I go up to the House as your representative, and shall consider that I go with the full confidence of my constituents, and that the people who send me there have sufficient confidence in me to leave to my judgment and discretion all matters of interest likely to come before the House for consideration.” Those were the statements made by me. I said,

to have an opportunity, although I may probably infringe the rules of debate, to point out the results that list clearly shows when analyzed. I will take, first, the list of those who voted with the "Ayes" against the Government on exactly the same issue as that now before the House. This shows the Government to have gained an extraordinary victory, when you consider that the well-known character and public services of each of those men gave them an immense advantage over any one new to political life who sought to oppose them. Amongst those members who voted against the Government we find Mr. Baigent. Well, he seems to have retired from political life, and another gentleman has been elected in his stead who is going to support the Government. I do not know that Mr. Baigent had entirely forfeited the confidence of his constituents; but, had he stood for election again, it is not at all likely that he would have been returned. Then, we find Mr. Barff in the same position. He was claimed by the Opposition, and his rejection is a victory to the Government. Mr. Curtis was in the Opposition, and he was not returned. Mr. Cutten is also in the same category. Sir Robert Douglas was also claimed by the Opposition. Mr. Fitzroy retired, and did not attempt to offer himself for re-election. Mr. Green was defeated by a gentleman who now graces the Treasury benches. Mr. Hobbs was beaten by Mr. Harris. Mr. Hart was beaten by Mr. Wright, who no doubt acquired a very great deal of prestige from the fact that he declared himself to be an independent Liberal. Well, Dr. Henry, no doubt, would be claimed as an Opposition member. Mr. Hunter was not returned again. The defeat of Mr. Macfarlane is no doubt a victory for our side. Mr. Moorhouse apparently had no chance for Christchurch, and, thinking discretion the better part of valour, he left the field to his opponents and went to the Ashley District. That gentleman's name is a household word in Canterbury, and it would be a pity if any constituency there refused to return him. Captain Morris was defeated, also Mr. Murray-Aynsley; and Mr. Richardson failed to be returned again. Mr. Rowe had no support, when proposing to stand, sufficient to justify him in entering upon a contest, and he also retired. Mr. Tawiti, Mr. Whitaker, and Mr. Williams were not again elected. Mr. Woolcock had no qualification. I cannot tell whether he would have been re-elected by the same constituency, but probably it was a lucky thing for him that he had no qualification. Mr. Fox was defeated, and his defeat is, undoubtedly, a victory for the Government. This exhausts the names of those members who sat in the last Parliament, and who voted in favour of the no-confidence motion. Now, I will take the other side—those members who voted with the Government on that occasion and who do not now hold seats in this House. Mr. Barton did not offer himself for re-election. He probably would have been elected had he done so. Mr. Carrington was opposed by Colonel Trimble, who is also an independent Liberal.

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I rose on that occa-
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honorable member for Grey
I may say that, when
speak on this question, I also-
considering, as I did, that there
experienced men here who knew
pretend to know upon the sub-
discussion, and being aware that it was
the young members to act the part
and to decide on the arguments used
who were here before them, and also
what had been said to the constituents
the late elections. Such being the case,
trust that, though I may differ from the ex-
perienced politicians in this House upon the great
principles that have been engrossing the attention
of the country, yet they will bear with me in the
remarks I am about to make. I will not, like
the honorable member for Auckland C^t

moreover, that with one or two exceptions I never had even seen the members of the Government; that I had taken infinite pains in reading all the speeches in *Hansard* during the want-of-confidence motion of last session, and that I was unable to give a decided opinion on the subject. I stated then that upon my arrival in Wellington I should be able to form a decided opinion, and in a very short time be able to judge for myself. I told them that, when I saw the parties on both sides, I should be able to decide in my own mind. Since I have come to Wellington I have so decided. I have weighed all matters in connection with this subject, and I have come to this conclusion: that, whilst I cannot conscientiously place confidence in the present Ministry, I can see in the ranks of the Opposition men in whom I could entirely trust the present and the future of this colony. So far as the matter stands between me and my constituents I have only this to say, that that is purely a matter which I have to explain to them, and the responsibility of it rests on my own shoulders.

Debate adjourned.

DEFICIENCY BILLS.

Sir G. GREY moved, That the Standing Order which provides that "the House will, in future, appoint the Committee of Supply and Ways and Means at the commencement of every session, so soon as an Address has been agreed to in answer to the Governor's Speech," be suspended to enable the House to go into Committee of Supply for the purpose of agreeing to a resolution authorizing the Government to borrow a sum of £180,000 from the Bank of New South Wales on deficiency bills. He explained to the House that the necessity had arisen from this circumstance: An Order in Council was issued by the Governor before the House met, which enabled the Government to raise money on deficiency bills to the extent of £400,000; but by the terms of the Order in Council the Government was only authorized to raise this money from the Bank of New Zealand, and it seemed that, although authority was given to raise the money, that authority did not empower the Government to go to any other bank except the Bank of New Zealand. At any rate, the question had been raised whether they had power to do so by the Order in Council, and it was thought that it would be better to get power to raise the sum now required—£180,000—from another bank. It was provided by law that, if the House was sitting, a resolution must be passed by the House authorizing the Government to raise money in the manner he had spoken of on deficiency bills. The Government having entered into an agreement, the purport of which he had stated to the House, he now asked the House to allow the Committee of Supply to be set up at once, for the purpose of passing the resolution of which he had spoken.

Motion agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Sir G. GREY moved the following resolution:—That, in accordance with the provisions of section 18 of "The Public Revenues Act, 1878,"

Mr. Masters

the Treasury is hereby authorized to borrow upon deficiency bills from any bank or other person a sum not exceeding £181,800, to be applied towards the redemption of other deficiency bills issued under section 14 of said Act, by virtue of certain Orders in Council dated the 15th and 17th days of April last.

Mr. HALL said that the Prime Minister had explained to him the circumstances of the case; and as it was necessary to pass the resolution, the money having already been raised from the Bank of New South Wales; and as the Order in Council had to be supplemented by a resolution of the House; and as the resolution would not involve the borrowing or spending of any further money; and, furthermore, as the Premier had explained that it was desired to send the resolution by the steamer going to Sydney next day, he thought it was his duty to support the resolution.

Major ATKINSON inquired how much money had been borrowed on deficiency bills.

Sir G. GREY explained that the amount included in the resolution was to replace deficiency bills to the extent of £180,000, which were to repay moneys borrowed from the Public Works Fund. This would make out the total amount of deficiency bills—£400,000.

Mr. DRIVER would ask the honorable gentleman the conditions on which this money had been borrowed from the Bank of New South Wales, and why it had not been borrowed from the bank with which the colony did its business. It occurred to him, hearing that the Bank of New Zealand had given notice to terminate its arrangement with the Government, that possibly that was the reason why the money was not borrowed from that bank.

Mr. McLEAN would also like to know whether the borrowing of this money from the Bank of New South Wales had anything to do with the notice given by the Bank of New Zealand to terminate its agreement at the present crisis, and whether the money was to be borrowed to pay an advance made by that bank which it declined to renew. It might be as well, also, if the honorable member would give some insight into the reasons which had induced the Bank of New Zealand to give notice of the termination of its agreement. He was not aware that the Government was obliged to take money on deficiency bills from any particular bank. He imagined that they had sufficient power to go to any bank they chose.

Sir G. GREY might say that he had no knowledge whatever of the reasons which had induced the Bank of New Zealand to give notice of its desire to terminate its arrangement with the Government. The termination of that arrangement had nothing whatever to do with the present transaction. He believed that notice of the termination of the agreement was given subsequently to this transaction being entered into—in fact, it was either on the same day or the day before—so that there was no relation whatever between the two matters. The Government thought it advisable to borrow from the Bank of New South Wales because that bank had made a general offer of assistance to them.

Other circumstances also led the Government to the conclusion to make an arrangement with the Bank of New South Wales by which money could be at once obtained. The terms on which the money was raised were 6 per cent., and $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. commission.

Mr. SHRIMSKI would like to know whether this was the first time of borrowing money from the Bank of New South Wales, that so much fuss was made about it. He believed the honorable member for Waikouaiti himself went over to Sydney on one occasion to borrow money from that bank for the Government, and no fuss was made about that.

Mr. McLEAN was making no fuss about the present transaction. He had merely stated that he believed the Government had as good a right to borrow from any other bank as from the Bank of New Zealand. He had borrowed money from this bank in Sydney for the Government, and was sure that it was a better transaction than this appeared to be. Although he belonged to what might be called an opposition bank to the Bank of New Zealand, he did not desire that at any time, and especially at a time of crisis like the present, any bank should suffer at the hands of the Government; and he considered that the bank which did the business of the colony had suffered at the hands of the present Government. In such a crisis as the present the Government ought to be acting with the greatest care, and endeavour to ease their bankers instead of borrowing, as they were doing, to the full extent of their power. As he did not wish to delay the no-confidence debate, he would refrain from making any further remarks, but would take an opportunity, when an Imprest Supply Bill was introduced, to inquire further into the circumstances of the termination of the agreement with the Bank of New Zealand.

Mr. JOHNSTON would like to have some explanation as to the authority under which the Government borrowed £180,000 from the Public Works Fund. The Public Revenues Act gave the Government authority to do so by Order in Council during the recess, but if Parliament was in session they must obtain authority by resolution of Committee of Supply. On the 16th of July last he asked the Treasurer whether any deficiency bills had been issued during the past financial year, and, if so, to what amount. To that question the Premier replied, "Deficiency bills were issued during the past financial year to the amount of £184,000, but they were redeemed within the year." They came then to the sitting of Parliament with no deficiency bills outstanding, and with no power existing for the Government to take any money whatever from the Public Works Fund. He could not find at the moment that the Committee of Supply gave the Government any such authority. Perhaps the Treasurer would be good enough to state on what date he obtained authority to take this money.

Sir G. GREY had stated to the House the date of the Order in Council, and it had been held that, the Order in Council having been issued authorizing the issue of deficiency bills to a certain amount, that Order in Council prevailed

and continued, although Parliament was sitting. If an Order in Council were issued in the recess for a greater amount of deficiency bills than were disposed of during the recess, that Order in Council could be acted upon when Parliament was sitting, or subsequently to its being in session.

Mr. J. C. BROWN would like to ask the Premier whether there was any truth in the report that the Bank of New Zealand held something like £750,000 of trust moneys, and that they were not in a position to give the colony accommodation to the extent of £400,000.

Sir G. GREY could not tell the precise amount of securities held by the Bank of New Zealand. It was a considerable sum; but he could not, without inquiry, tell what it was, because all sorts of funds were mixed up together. But the Bank of New Zealand had not refused the accommodation referred to. There was no application made to the bank. In point of fact, he thought himself at the time, and still thought, that in not requesting the bank to do this the Government was relieving the bank from pressure.

Resolution agreed to, and reported to the House.

On the question, That it be read a second time, Major ATKINSON said he wished to guard himself from expressing approval of this transaction. He could not quite understand it, and did not wish to detain the House just then by referring to it. All he wished to do was to guard himself, so that he might be at liberty on any future occasion to make any comments he might think necessary. He simply agreed to it because he understood that the Government considered it necessary in the interests and for the credit of the colony.

Resolution read a second time, and agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Debate resumed.

Mr. SEDDON.—Mr. Speaker, I rise, for the first time, to say a few words on a question which has not only engrossed the attention of this colony, but also received serious consideration at the hands of our sister colonies. I must first say, however, that my thanks are due to the House for the courtesy shown me this afternoon by the adjournment of the debate. I rose on that occasion without premeditation, and in consequence of the action of the honorable member for Grey Valley Mr. Masters. I may say that, when asked last night to speak on this question, I absolutely declined, considering, as I did, that there were grave and experienced men here who knew more than I could pretend to know upon the subject under discussion, and being aware that it was the duty of the young members to act the part of jurymen, and to decide on the arguments used by those who were here before them, and also upon what had been said to the constituents during the late elections. Such being the case, I trust that, though I may differ from the experienced politicians in this House upon the great principles that have been engrossing the attention of the country, yet they will bear with me in the remarks I am about to make. I will not, like the honorable member for Auckland City East,

say that I dare them afterwards to attack my remarks, for I feel that, owing to my inexperience, those remarks will be open to be assailed. But, Sir, with the experience I have had and the knowledge I have gleaned while serving in the position of a representative on local bodies, I shall try to convince some of those members who are on the Opposition benches that in the course they are adopting on the present occasion they are not doing that which is right and good, and that which will be beneficial to the colony at large. I stand in the responsible position of being a representative of a class of men who are the first in this colony to whom has been granted the right of manhood suffrage. That responsibility alone ought to have great weight with me in what I have to say, because it is an experiment that has been tried since the year 1865. I allude to the Miners Representation Act, which was passed in that year. That measure gave manhood suffrage to the miners of the colony, and being, as I am, purely a miners' representative, I say that I am responsible to the constituency I represent, which is a very important one. Knowing this—knowing the responsibility that rests upon my shoulders, and knowing also that every member of this House should weigh all he has to say in the same scale in which I shall weigh what I have to say, and remember that he is the elected of the people at a very important time—at a time so important that I think never in the history of the Colony of New Zealand have measures so large been submitted to the people—I say, Sir, that, knowing as I do that the four members from Hokitika and Greymouth represent constituencies comprising 16,000 souls, and that I myself am responsible to 3,500 souls, I feel that we should weigh well with those members in this House whose responsibilities are very small indeed, though their parliamentary experience may be very great. Now, Sir, what is the position of affairs? When the motion was brought forward last session condemning the Government for maladministration, it was alleged, and endeavoured to be proved, that they had mismanaged the affairs of the colony. An appeal was made to the country; and what has been the response? How is it you see so many new members sitting on these benches? Simply because the voice of the people is with the Ministry. It is said that the only questions submitted to the country were those of manhood suffrage, triennial Parliaments, a redistribution of seats, and those other measures that were introduced by the Government; but I say more than that was submitted to the people. It was a question as to whether, those principles having been enunciated by the present Government, they were the fit and proper persons to be entrusted with the carrying of them out. What has been the verdict in the large centres of population? In Christchurch we find Sir George Grey and Mr. Andrews returned. At Greymouth there were also two members returned as pronounced Greyites. At Hokitika we find the same result. We go to Auckland—another large centre of population—and we find that the people there have also elected Greyites. The only centre of population which has declared

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against the Grey Ministry is Dunedin; and the people there have declared against more than that. I remember the days well when the Victorian miners came there and landed in numbers—men who were prepared to “do or dee,” as the saying is—men who were prepared to come there and develop their country for them, and make it such a country as it had never been before. These men were told by the Old Identities, “Gang awa’ out of this, with your clout-houses; we dinna want you here—we dinna want you here.” I say that if you take the aggregate number of votes that were recorded for those candidates who declared themselves Greyites, and the aggregate number of votes polled for those who stood forward in opposition, you will find that we have polled throughout the length and breadth of New Zealand three votes to one. That will be proved when the returns are laid on the table showing the names of the various candidates and the number of votes polled for each. Take the Grey Valley, or the district I have the honor to represent, take the West Coast generally—and what has been the verdict of the electors? It has been this: 5,600 votes were recorded in favour of those candidates who declared for Sir George Grey, and 600 in favour of the gentlemen who had the audacity to stand as oppositionists against those candidates. That is a very significant fact, as showing what the result would be if the principle of manhood suffrage existed, because it is in the mining district principally that the manhood-suffrage vote would be exercised. Now, I will ask whether, when the last vote of want of confidence was passed in this House, any of the charges made were proved. Let any member read through the answers made to the charges. The arguments were scarcely worth listening to, and you will find that nothing of a serious nature whatever was proved. When I heard the leader of the Opposition deliver his speech the other night, I was astonished at the frivolous nature of the charges; for frivolous they were when placed in contrast with the great principles that have been submitted to the country. In saying that, I feel bound to remark that the West Coast is in a peculiar position at the present moment. The people of Canterbury are our neighbours—they have been connected with the West Coast since the first introduction of population into that part of the country; and the name of the leader of the Opposition is a name which is highly respected there. He is looked upon there as an able, honest man, and a conscientious politician; and his action on the present occasion has placed us in the peculiar position of which I have spoken. What is the past history of the West Coast? It is this: Up to the present time we have not received our rights. The representatives of Otago and Canterbury have deprived us of our privileges, and we, together with the people in the extreme North and in the extreme South shall have to band together to insist upon obtaining the rights to which we are entitled; although it must be borne in mind that we contribute more to the revenue than either Canterbury or Otago. I speak with diffidence, because it has been said of

the West Coast members that they are accustomed to stand up and make long speeches with very little in them; and, knowing that, I wish to be very guarded in what I say. Still, I feel bound to bring before you the grievances of the people of the West Coast, and strike home to those persons who are best entitled to bear the blame of our past injustice and neglect. When the West Coast Gold Fields broke out the people of Canterbury treated us shamefully. They treated us as the people of Dunedin treated the Victorian diggers who went there on the breaking-out of the Otago Gold Fields. And who was our champion then? Mr. Hall. He incurred a good deal of odium for what he did in our behalf. The people of Canterbury said he was doing too much for the West Coast. He insisted upon opening up communication between the two places, just as Mr. Moorhouse insisted on opening up that communication between Christchurch and Lyttelton, which so much benefitted the City of the Plains. Well, Sir, the West Coast was first populated and fostered by the honorable member who now leads the Opposition; and Canterbury as usual reaped the benefit. As we progressed we found that we had amongst us a few disappointed lawyers, political carpet-baggers, and printers who had no real interest in the place, and who desired separation. These people got up a petition and presented it to this House. Well, Sir, Westland had to be experimented upon. It was not right to give us a province such as existed throughout the length and breadth of the land. We were regarded as outcasts who must be experimented upon, and we were experimented upon by being created the first County Council in New Zealand. What was the effect? As a certain amount of territory had been taken from Canterbury—a territory composed principally of mountain gorges and pine-trees, with gold and other minerals hidden in the earth—it was decided that an adjustment should take place; and an experienced person was sent over to value the estate. And how did he do it? The award was made out on the basis of population. Now, let any man seriously think of the idea of fixing an award on the basis of population on a gold field, where two or three shafts may be sunk to-day, the field proves a “duffer,” and the men go away. That was the case with Westland. The people went away, and it was a long time before we could get them back. But the award was made, and the country was so completely impoverished that we had no money to make roads, bridges, or anything else. It was as much as we could do to get tracks to go through the country. We had had an adjustment: did we get a readjustment? We applied for it; but no, there was no readjustment for us. Canterbury, Shylock-like, would have its pound of flesh. Those who were in power—a number of them are in the House now—refused it. But what did they do? They gave us a province. After the experiment was proved a failure we got a province and the privileges of the provincial system. But I think it is only right to say that at the time this agitation took place for separation a petition was presented to this House against it. That petition was sent by persons in the West-

land District who resided on the Teremakau, in the Grey River District, and on the Nelson South-West Gold Field. They protested; and how was their petition treated? Perhaps it will be as well if I read from *Hansard* of 1867 to show how it was received:—

“That the petition received from certain inhabitants in the District of Westland be ordered to be printed, and be referred to a Select Committee to report thereon, with power to call for persons and papers; to report in a fortnight. Committee to consist of Major Atkinson, Mr. Burns, Mr. Moorhouse, Mr. Reid, and Mr. Curtis.”

I find that Mr. Stafford moved that the petition be discharged, and consequently it was discharged. And the members of this House who voted for its discharge, who denied us this modicum of justice, ask us now to allow them to sit on those benches, and do for us what they have done before—that is, refuse to give us justice. I find that on this question the honorable member who now leads the Opposition and the present member for Ashley, Mr. Moorhouse, differed. Mr. Moorhouse, in the course of a very forcible argument, which is recorded in *Hansard*, said that it was injudicious—that it was not a petition emanating from the diggers, but from disappointed lawyers, printers, and people who wanted situations under the new form of government. On this occasion Mr. Hall and Mr. Moorhouse came to very high words, and called each other madmen. Here is a short passage from the discussion that took place between them:—

“Mr. HALL.—If the honorable member chose to stigmatize the petition from 2,600 of his own constituents as a piece of madness, it ought to be known to his constituents, and he (Mr. Hall) would see that it was. It was not fair of the honorable gentleman to make such a use of his position in that House; he knew what the honorable member would have said if he had made such a remark.

“Mr. MOORHOUSE.—I believe the honorable member himself is quite susceptible of the madness I spoke of.

“Mr. HALL.—Did the honorable member attribute madness to him? If so, he would say one of the two might be mad, but he would leave it to the House to determine which of them it was.”

From that it appears that there is not much difference between the two. The honorable member for Cheviot has accused the Premier of imbecility; but, as Mr. Hall has accused Mr. Moorhouse of madness in times gone by, and Mr. Moorhouse returned the compliment, it is evident that this is not the first time these terms have been used, so that I hope the Premier will take little notice of the honorable member for Cheviot. But to proceed with this county question. We find that the same old member whom the honorable member for Ashley was unable to shake off still wished to grasp power, and insisted on inserting in the Act a nominee Chairman. We were to have the privileges of the county system, but we were not to have a Chairman elected by

the people or by the Council. I will read the 14th section of the County of Westland Act, which is to this effect: "The said Council shall consist of seven members, whereof one, who shall be Chairman thereof, shall be appointed by the Governor in Council." But the best part of the matter, as regards the selection of the Chairman by the Governor, was this: Who was the nominee of the Governor? Mr. John Hall. There seemed, from the result, to have been a method in his madness. Why, Sir, they treated Westland as they wish to treat this House and the members of it who have been elected by the people. They said, "You are not the people to choose who are to sit on the Government benches. We are the persons to do that; and we will carry out the principles which, in 1867, were recorded on the Statute Book of the colony." I am not going to say that Mr. Hall did not make a good County Chairman. I only wish we had had as good a Chairman the whole time. I do not wish to reflect upon his administration: it was perhaps a judicious choice. The principle is the thing I differ from. I differed from it at that time, and I differ from it now. I do not believe in nominee-ship, as regards either local government or the government of the colony generally. The next point to which I wish to refer is this: After this award was made, and when the Bill was introduced to make Westland a province, the question of our financial affairs came up for settlement. Then, the members of this House who had been instrumental in running us into debt and placing us in this peculiar position, were the very persons who would not make us an exceptional case, and we still had to bear these burdens until the provincial system was swept away by the Abolition Act in 1876. I ask, Was there any improvement made then? I ask members on the Opposition benches whether, in passing the Act of 1876, they made any improvement on the previous system of government. They did nothing of the kind so far as Westland was concerned. They certainly took over the Canterbury debt and added it to the consolidated debt of the colony; they certainly relieved us to that extent, and we were thankful for it; but, notwithstanding that, they left us in the same position as all other gold fields. While large Government subsidies were given to counties in which there were large rateable properties, they gave nothing whatever to the gold-fields counties. They said, "We make an exception of you. We give you the gold duty, and we will not give you a subsidy from the consolidated revenue." What does the gold duty mean? It means additional taxation. It means that at the Port of Hokitika alone we have exported 2,000,000 ounces of gold, on which we have paid £200,000 as a special tax. When they gave us the gold duty why did they not take it as taxation, and give us a subsidy of pound for pound upon it, in the same way as they give subsidies according to taxation in those counties where there are large agricultural properties? But we got nothing of the kind. The subsidies were promised to last only five years. What does that bring us up to? The money was borrowed from the Home-country for the construc-

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tion of these public works; and where was it spent? It was spent principally in Canterbury and Otago, and, having been spent there, the Government which constructed those works, and so increased the value of property there, was then forced for five years to pay from the consolidated revenue a subsidy upon the very improvements that made those properties valuable. We now find that the position of affairs is this: The local bodies in Canterbury and Otago possess large amounts to their credit; and in the North Island and in Westland—and in gold fields districts particularly—the local bodies are in debt, and are simply asking charity from the Government. Certain mites have been thrown to them from time to time, not only by the present Government, but by past Governments. That is bad legislation, and I say that those men on the Opposition benches are responsible for that bad legislation. Now, we were promised at that time that we were to have roads and bridges. It was said that the peculiar geographical position of Westland did not entitle it to railways, but we were to have a main trunk road from Nelson down to Jackson's Bay, and bridges across the rivers. What is the result? This took place in 1865, but until the latter part of 1877 the roads were not constructed, and neither were the bridges made. It is true that amounts were set down on the estimates by the Government which was turned out of office by the Grey Ministry; but no doubt they would have suffered the same fate as other amounts which were set down in previous years, but which were never expended. Under the present Ministry we got our bridges and roads. Those gentlemen who now occupy the Opposition benches, and who wish to get on the Government benches, are responsible for the loss of life which has occurred through the want of those works. There are orphans in Westland who are at the present time crying for bread, and there are widows crying for the men who used to win that bread, and who have lost their lives through the want of roads and bridges. There are sixty cases of that kind on record, besides many more that we know nothing about. I lay the responsibility of those deaths upon the men who would not give us railways, and who promised us roads and bridges which we never got. With regard to the accusations made against the Government by the honorable member for Selwyn, I ask, Was his charge proved with respect to the financial position of the colony? Did not the reply given by the Premier sufficiently set that at rest? The Premier was accused, first of all, of not having brought down a Financial Statement. Now, the position of affairs was this: There had been a verdict given by the House that the Government was guilty of maladministration, and after the judges had delivered sentence they actually asked that the Treasurer should come down and prove himself innocent. That argument reminds me of Kentucky law—Hang a man, and try him afterwards. I have no doubt that when we do get a Financial Statement from the present Government—as I trust we shall—it will be a satisfactory one not only to the House, but to the whole colony, and to the Home-country, where

we borrow our money. The honorable member for Selwyn told us that the present Government had corrupted the Press. As far as I am individually concerned, there is no man in my locality who has been so much abused by the Press, but somehow I flourish under the abuse, simply because the people in our part of the colony look at both sides of the question, and have come to the conclusion that I have acted honestly as regards local affairs. As far as we possibly can we must always encourage and foster this institution. As an abler speaker than I am has said, "the Press is a grand institution—an institution that the people, not only of New Zealand, but of the whole world, have to thank for the liberties they enjoy." Such being the case, it does not speak well for the Opposition that because they wish to get into power they say the Press of New Zealand is corrupt. It goes further than that. Astute as the honorable gentleman who now leads the Opposition may be, who does not know what the effect of his words may be elsewhere? How are we judged abroad? Are we not judged by our Press? Do not our Parliamentary debates go abroad? I say that the statement that a Government which has been in power for two years has been retained there by a corrupt Press, must injure the credit of the colony. That being the case, any honorable gentleman wishing to hold the position of a Minister ought to be very careful as to the words he uses respecting the Press of the colony. I say that we have not got a corrupt Press in New Zealand. The next question to be answered is, What would you do with the Press? I know that in the local body in which I sit we called for tenders for advertising, and we found that it was not satisfactory. Some papers have a larger circulation than others; but papers conducted at a very low cost and having a very small circulation can successfully compete with better ones as regards the price to be charged for advertisements. It is, consequently, not always fair to give the work to the lowest tenderer. The honorable member for Auckland City East said that we should pay no newspaper for advertisements. I disagree altogether with that argument. We must, as business men, advertise for the benefit of our business. As members of the House we must advertise for the benefit of the colony. To say that you would pay no newspaper for advertisements would mean that the papers could not afford to go on, and we should therefore have no publicity. What I would say is, that encouragement ought to be given to the whole of the papers, and I would leave it to the men who sit on the Government benches to say what should be given to the whole of the papers for the advertisements. If that were done we should find that the papers would be able to be independent, and we should not have the bickering which goes on at present. We should find then that the Press would ably assist those in the position of legislators, and would, as it sometimes does now, perhaps take the weak side of an argument and make the most of it. We should place the Press in an independent position, and one honorable to those gentlemen who have so far

ably conducted the Fourth Estate in the Colony of New Zealand. I now come to the question of lunatic asylums. The honorable member for Selwyn made a very serious charge against the Government in connection with this question, and I must say that until I heard the explanation afterwards given there seemed to me to be something in it; but when I came to reason the matter over I said to myself that surely the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Stevens), the honorable member for Selwyn, and other Canterbury members, were to blame for having tolerated such a state of things. If such a state of affairs existed with regard to the West Coast, I am sure that the members from that district would continue to make long speeches until justice was done. Another attack was made by the honorable member for Selwyn against the Hon. the Minister of Mines, and I must certainly say that at the time I felt pained by the remarks of the honorable member. They have been made jocularly, but they will appear in the historical records of the House; and I do not think I should be doing justice if I did not resent the insult cast on the miners of the Totara District. The honorable member for Selwyn said that, because certain favours were showered by the Government on that district, it would be more than a man's life was worth to go down to Ross to oppose the Minister of Mines. I was astonished at that remark, because no man knows the class of men there better than the honorable member for Selwyn. I say that if he went down there—I do not care what principles he propounded—the miners would have said, Give him fair-play. They would have listened to him, and, whether or not he succeeded in convincing them, there would be no lives lost. I am bound to say that there is no ground whatever for such an accusation. When the construction of the Mikonui Water-race was first brought forward the honorable member for Selwyn was a member of the Government. It was proposed to give the Messrs. Brogden twenty chains wide of land along the whole extent of the Mikonui Water-race, if they would undertake its construction. If those terms had been agreed to, that water-race would no doubt have been constructed; but what would have been the effect upon the people of the district? The miners would have been serfs under the Messrs. Brogden, and they would have been compelled to work at a certain price; or men would have been brought from the Old Country, and perhaps Chinese would have poured into the district. We refused to have the Mikonui Water-race constructed on those terms. There had been a constant agitation going on for the construction of this water-race. The late honorable member for Totara, Mr. Tribe, earnestly, persistently, and strenuously advocated the construction of this race. He was so far successful that the Government agreed to give £20,000 if certain local bodies would guarantee a certain amount towards its construction. Under a peculiarly-constructed Act there was no power given to the local bodies to give the guarantee required. In April last I was one of a deputation that waited upon the Minister for Public Works and asked him to give

a certain sum of money to enable them to make a commencement, and he promised to comply with our request. I can say, from personal knowledge, that there was no foundation for the statement that the money was given as a sop at election-time to secure the return of the Hon. the Minister of Mines. It was nothing more than carrying out what was promised by the Minister for Public Works in April last. I think I have replied to the principal remarks of the honorable member for Selwyn; I will now refer to some of the statements made by the honorable member for Cheviot (Mr. Saunders). When I came into this Chamber I naturally expected that at all events no comparisons would be made between the old members and the new. When I found that the young members returned to this House—the young Greyites—were compared to greyhounds, then I thought, with Mrs. Malaprop, that “comparisons are odorous.” When I heard the honorable member speak, there was a certain doggedness in his style of speech that did not tend to raise him in my estimation. He seemed very bitter. He seemed to be a person whom the world had not treated well. It appeared as if his temper had been soured by something done to him which was not calculated to raise his fellow-men in his estimation. The honorable member will find, with regard to the young members, that, whether or not their colour be grey, or whatever it may be, there is a watchfulness about them. If the honorable gentleman had said we were watch-dogs, I do not think I should have found fault with him. He will find, no matter who sits on the Government benches, that the young members will watch carefully so as to secure that which is best and most conducive to the welfare of the colony. The honorable gentleman referred to the members on the Government side as greyhounds, and said they were “running cunningly.” Whatever their running may be, I hope it will be straight. What will be the effect if they run crookedly or cunningly? They will find themselves in the same position as the honorable member referred to—Mr. Hobbs. I suppose it was a piece of cunning when that honorable member referred to the Native Minister in terms which I believe were not only condemned by this House, but by the whole country. For the good of the country at large, it was only right that that gentleman should be relegated to obscurity. Where are all the other members who ran cunningly? Why, they find themselves in the same position as Mr. Hobbs. Where is the honorable member for Hokitika, Mr. Barff, who, before he came into the House, pledged himself to give the Government a fair and impartial support? He is left out in the cold. If the honorable members who have now been returned are found running cunningly they will share the same fate as overtook Mr. Barff and Mr. Hobbs. The honorable member for Cheviot adopted the phrase used by Napoleon, that the young recruits were “food for cannon,” and said the young greyhounds were food for gammon. In the position he takes up at the present time there is too much Canterbury about it, and too much cant. The position in which we are placed

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is this: Are we to allow Canterbury and Otago to rule the country for their benefit? It is the money they are grasping after. That being the case, can we place on those benches the honorable member for Geraldine, who is an aspirant for office; the honorable member for Cheviot; the honorable member for Selwyn; or the honorable member for Ashley? There is another honorable member whose surname is the same as my Christian name. I refer to the honorable member Mr. Dick, who, no doubt, is an aspirant for a seat on the Treasury benches. There is another honorable member I wish to refer to, the honorable member for Riverton (Mr. McCaughan), who is one of those gentlemen who have been “gammoned.” There was one remark made by the honorable member for Cheviot which under the circumstances filled me with a feeling of regret. I have, at all times and under all circumstances, revered old age. When we were told by the honorable member for Cheviot that the Premier, on account of old age, was becoming imbecile, I felt deeply pained that such a remark should be made in this House. It was a remark which should not have been accepted in such a quiet way. I felt inclined to ask Mr. Speaker whether it was language that should be tolerated. The honorable gentleman who is now the leader of the Opposition is said to have been rejected in former days by his party on account of his youth, but before long he convinced those of old age and experience that he knew more of what was good for them than they did themselves. I listened attentively to the temperate remarks made by the honorable member for Selwyn, and was ready to be convinced by force of argument. I trust that every honorable member in this House will at all times be willing to be convinced by argument. I was prepared to listen to his arguments and to weigh them well in my mind; but I stand here as one who will not be bounced into anything. The honorable member for Cheviot tried to bounce the young recruits, or “greyhounds.” If he attempts to bounce me he will soon see that my motto will be “No surrender.” I will now make a few remarks on the questions alluded to in the Governor's Speech. I am entirely in accord with the Government as regards triennial Parliaments. The honorable member for Selwyn did not tell the House, to my satisfaction, that he would take up the measures introduced by the Government, nor did he give us in his speech any sketch whatever of the amendments that he would propose in them. It has always been my opinion that it was a good thing to let the representatives of the people meet their constituents as often as they possibly could. We should find that we should not have the same evils as we have had in the past. Measures would not be likely to pass that would have a detrimental effect for years to come. I also think that the same safeguard should be placed upon this House as is placed upon the local bodies, and that is, that they should not have the power to legislate on subjects affecting the finance of the colony for a longer period than their term of office. I believe that, upon questions of finance particularly, the House should not be able to commit the country for any longer

term than their own term of office. Now, as regards the matter of the indebtedness of the colony, I will ask this question: How much has the indebtedness of the colony been increased since the gentlemen now occupying the Ministerial benches have been placed in office? Or was the indebtedness spoken of by the honorable member for Bruce this afternoon, or the principal portion of it, not incurred before those honorable gentlemen came into power? I say it was. We find that the first loan that was asked for by those honorable gentlemen was refused, and refused by the Opposition, to the disadvantage of the country at large. At that time we could have floated a loan on far better terms than we can get one floated to-day. Who is responsible for that? I say the members of the Opposition are responsible; and, knowing that to be the case, and knowing also that if the proposal of the Government had been accepted the colony would have been placed in a far better position financially than it is now in, I say that the members of the Opposition have no right to say that our financial position is due to the gentlemen who sit on the Government benches. I now come to the Native question. On that question I am, to a certain extent, as it were, inexperienced; but I am not inexperienced in one way, because during the time this question has engrossed the attention of the House—for the last four years—I have been a careful reader of *Hansard*; and I full well know, if the pages of *Hansard* are to be believed, and if the statements of honorable members in this House are to be believed, that our relations with the Natives have not been of a satisfactory kind. I do not say that they are satisfactory now; and I say this much, that it will take some time—some years—before we have a satisfactory position of affairs with regard to the Natives. That has been the case in older countries than this, where the work of dealing satisfactorily with aboriginal tribes has been one that has taken half a century or a century to accomplish. The same thing, I apprehend, will occur in New Zealand. But I will say this much as regards the charge made about the survey of the Waimate Plains—that that charge is one which is entirely without foundation. I will ask who first ordered that survey to take place. Was it the members of the Opposition who first mooted it, and who first confiscated the land? I say it was; and, such being the case, if the surveyors were upon the land, and if instructions were given to them to survey it, it did not follow, because, as has been said, they were putting the pegs in Titokowaru's hut, that the Government were going to sell the land. When surveyed, then the reserves could be defined, and such reserves given to the Natives as they were entitled to; and in this manner the promises given to them by previous Governments would have been kept. I say that the charge made against the Government with respect to the survey of the Waimate Plains is fallacious. I say it was not proved. We find, also, remarks made as regards the price at which this land was to be sold. We found that the honorable member who made the remarks about the price did not seem to understand much about it. He says the

Government fixed the upset price at £5 an acre, and that any person buying it must know that there was a danger hanging over it. The upset price was fixed at £5 an acre as a safeguard against land-sharks, so that they should not take advantage of the people of the colony and get this land at £2 an acre. I fully understand why the upset price was fixed at £5 an acre, and, seeing that it was to be sold by public auction, and that the upset price was £5 an acre, I say nothing could be fairer than that. When I went round that country, having in view the taking-up of a block of land there, matters were in this condition: When I was going there, as I started from Wellington I found that there was great anxiety entertained as to the possibility of an outrage. When I went to Wanganui I found they were easier on that subject than in Wellington, and when I got to the spot itself the people were not speaking of it at all. But when I got to the land I found a gentleman representing a large firm in this town telling every one he came in contact with, "I am sure there will be a row; I am sure there will be bloodshed; no white man will be allowed to go on this land without a fight;" and yet, at the same time, he was there from a Wellington firm picking up the best blocks and marking them on a plan. Such being the case, I must say that when I came back I gave the people of the colony the benefit of the information I received. As to the occurrences which took place afterwards, the same thing has been and will continue to be so long as we are a colony, until we get roads and railways through the colony. It is those who have axes to grind in order to get this land that have been the cause of agitating and increasing the Native distrust, so that this land when sold might be sold to their benefit, and not to the benefit of the colony, or of the finances of the Government. There is another question—a question that was spoken of by the honorable member for Bruce. He spoke upon the question of the land and the land laws, and he accused the Government in the first instance of not asking the Governor, at the time these first land laws were passed, to use his veto; in a breath, shortly after that, he said that the honorable gentleman who holds the position of Premier had done wrong because he asked the Governor—what to do? To disallow a Bill that was passed which gave a longer tenure to the leaseholders of Canterbury. When we find an honorable member one moment arguing one thing, and the next moment contradicting it, that argument must fall to the ground. I will say this much: that the land laws up to the present time have not been made for the benefit of the colonists at large, but for the benefit of a favoured few; and the favoured few—men of means and money—have got hold of large blocks of land; and, if we do not step in to prevent it, the same thing will continue in the future, and in the end we shall be in the same position as those in older countries. I may say that when the honorable member for Grey and Bell was speaking on this question, and on other questions affecting the colony and the interests of the people, I listened to him with attention. I must certainly say that

there was some forcible argument adduced by him; but there is this much that left a doubt on my mind: I have ascertained since that the honorable member has only been a short time in the colony. He is, therefore, in this position: that, while he can judge the present Government by its mistakes, he knows nothing whatever of the past records of the colony, or, if he did, he would not be sitting in his present position and holding his present opinions, if the principles he enunciated are well founded. He said he was a Liberal, and he gave a true definition of Liberalism. In the Old Country he would be called a Radical. The honorable member for Bruce attacked the issues that were brought forth by the Chartists of England. What do we find? That three points asked for by the Chartists in the Old Country have been granted. It has taken a number of years to bring it about; but what has brought it about? The moment the franchise was extended these points were gained, and the people now enjoy the privileges so conferred upon them. But we hear very little of the sufferings that occurred between the time when these things were first asked and the time when they were granted. I say, if the honorable gentleman (Colonel Trimble) had been in the colony for the last twenty-five years, and if he were also well acquainted with the past deeds of men, and the records generally, he would be sitting, like me, on this side of the House; he would be speaking for us, assisting us by his experience; he would not be a party to a wrong-doing—for a wrong-doing it is. Now, Sir, I come to the question that brought me to speak this evening. I come to the remarks made by the honorable member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters). Well, I must certainly say that what I have got to remark on that point pains me deeply. If I were saying it to the honorable member for Riverton (Mr. McCaughan), I should have, perhaps, the same feeling of pain, though we are only slightly acquainted; but, long as is my acquaintance with the honorable member for Grey Valley, I must say that I feel pained on his taking up his present position. I feel also sorry that he should be a party to disfranchising one of the largest electorates in the colony; for we find that he intends to vote for the Opposition, his colleague will vote as he voted before, and, such being the case, the Grey Valley is disfranchised. If at the time when the contest was going on this had been publicly known, I ask, would the same result have happened? I certainly say, No. The people on the West Coast are not ungrateful, and I will prove it by the records of the ballot-box. Twelve hundred votes were polled for the honorable member (Mr. Masters), and the same number for his colleague. The people to a man went to support the present Ministry. I will refer to some remarks that were made by the honorable member, and I will ask the House to judge from that as to whether what I say is not a fact. [The honorable member quoted from addresses made by Mr. Masters to his constituents.] At many of the electorates Mr. Masters did not put in an appearance at all, and the electors at those places voted for him on the strength of the declarations he made in that published address I

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have quoted from. And, more than that, a gentleman who once held the position of member for the Grey Valley was canvassing for Mr. Masters in that part of the district which he could not visit, and when asked by some members, who knew that he, when in the House, had been in opposition, whether Mr. Masters would go into opposition, he replied he had nothing to do with Mr. Masters in that respect, because Mr. Masters was a supporter of the Grey Government. That is a positive fact; and I know that Mr. Masters, before he left our district, was very indignant because some of the papers had the audacity to put him down as "doubtful." Can Mr. Masters for a moment say that he has any reason for believing the Government will not carry on the works which he made a condition of his support? No. I know that he has had an intimation from the first that the West Coast will receive the same attention that it has received in the past from this Government. When the honorable member had that assurance he had cut from under his feet every argument that would have at all justified him in turning round upon the constituency, and depriving the Grey Valley of its voting power in this House. As I have said privately, I would do anything I could if the honorable gentleman would not turn traitor to his constituency. It is an absolute fact that, when information went down to the Grey Valley that Mr. Masters had changed sides, there was a general burst of indignation, and telegrams were at once sent to him advising him to prove true to the party by which he was elected. I do not wish to have the West Coast in the same position that it has occupied for years past. It seems to me that members sent up from the Coast have been working one against another—one has been for the Opposition, one for the Government, another independent; and the result has been that the Coast has had nothing done for it: and the Opposition would like to see us placed in that position again. It is very painful to me to rise here and say what I have said about my old friend Mr. Masters; and though when I once take up a position I will fight it out to the last, though I will never cry, *Peccavi*, though I will never ask for quarter for myself, yet for the sake of the Coast, and for the sake of Mr. Masters himself, I ask the Opposition to release that honorable gentleman from the bond they have extracted from him. There is much more weight attached to this matter than the members of the Opposition seem to think; and as they are—perhaps with a view of bringing in waverers—boasting of their large majority—a majority of six—they can well afford to allow my friend Mr. Masters to be an honest man. I have been in the peculiar position that honorable gentleman is in, and therefore can speak feelingly. As a member of the Provincial Council of Westland, I, at one time, not having received for my district those works to which we had a right, determined to go over to the Opposition, and vote against the party I had been allied with for two years. The pledge I gave was given in the heat of passion, at a moment when I was off my guard, and for three days and nights I was as miserable as I could

possibly be. I feel satisfied that is the case with my honorable friend. He is not the Edward Masters that left Greymouth; and, such being the case, I ask the Opposition to do as I have requested, especially as it is a matter of such importance to the West Coast. It is said by members of the Opposition, "Oh! if we turn the Government out, Mr. Masters will get everything for his district." But what would be the good of one vote? Perhaps they have offered him a seat on the Government benches, knowing his business would not allow him to take it.

Mr. MASTERS.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—I take his word for it. Such being the case, the position he will occupy will be this: We, as a party, are pledged to carry out liberal measures: we must keep together, and he, being but one, will not be worth winning; and therefore the West Coast will be neglected in the future as it has been in the past. There will be but one member on one side of the House as against six of us on the other side. I hope, therefore, the Opposition will be generous, and allow the honorable member not to record his vote at all. As there is a doubt upon a point of such importance, it would be far better that the honorable gentleman should do as did Mr. Goldie last session, who, as he was not in accord with the feelings of his constituents, and did not want to destroy his colleague's vote, abstained from voting, and allowed his colleague to record his vote as desired by the constituency. Grey Valley should have one vote on an important occasion like this; and therefore I say, Let the honorable member follow the example I have cited, and abstain from voting. I should be sorry indeed to see a gentleman who has held the good opinion of his fellow-men in his locality, who has raised himself in that same locality to the position he occupies at the present time, and who has won that respect during the course of years—I say I should be sorry to see such a man ruthlessly throw away the confidence he has gained: and yet he must throw it away if he votes with the Opposition. He said this afternoon that he had some reason to doubt the gentlemen who occupied the Government benches, but that among the Opposition there were men who would make a good Ministry, and carry measures beneficial to the country. Well, I say we have had experience of those gentlemen in the past, and it shows us this, that they have no desire to see the Coast progress; whilst our experience during the short time that the present Ministry has been in office has been of an opposite character. Under these circumstances he has no business to record his vote against the Government, but should vote for us; and I trust he will do so. We have historical authority for saying that even at the eleventh hour there is hope, and I trust that after all we shall not find that any of the members from the West Coast belong to the genus Rodent. I do not think the West Coast members deserve that name. We certainly had one on the last occasion; but he has been relegated to obscurity, and we know it must be two or three years before he can have an opportunity of emerging from that obscurity.

An Hon. MEMBER.—In six months.

Mr. SEDDON.—Some gentleman says in six months; but I say that is impossible, and the reason is this: Supposing we pass a Bill amending the electoral law this session, whoever is in power it will take at least twelve months for the people to get on the electoral rolls. Then another session will be here, and an election will not then take place. There will, of course, be a fight, and, if either side is beaten, that side will claim that it would have a majority if the Parliament were elected on the basis of manhood suffrage, and there will then be a dissolution; but it must be practically two years hence before that can take place. Some gentlemen have complained that the Premier in his speech went to the old countries—to France, to England, to Ireland, and Scotland, and even landed in Babylon. Well, suppose he did. What guides the world at the present time but experience? And if from the experience of other countries we may gain useful lessons, why should we not appeal to that experience? If the people have suffered from the legislation in other countries, why should we not take warning? Every conscientious representative in this House will endeavour to prevent such things recurring in this colony. We must be guided by experience. Take the whole of the sciences. Have they not improved of late years? Have not the experiments and experiences of years been handed down to us for years, and have we not benefited by them? Take the improvements in machinery and in the means of saving labour, and see what we have gained by them. It is by the experience of the past that these have been brought about, and so I say that it is from the experience of the past in this colony—the, to me, painful experience—that we should learn not to trust those who have previously guided its affairs. Why are we taxed to the extent of £12 10s. per head a year, when the people of Victoria and New South Wales are only taxed to the extent of about £3 per head? Why are our burdens something like £50 per head of population, when in Victoria they are only about £12? Is it not the effect of bad legislation and bad administration? Are we to throw the blame on the gentlemen who have occupied those benches only about two years? No, Sir; it is their predecessors that we must blame for the position in which we find ourselves. I come now to the question of the land laws; and I may refer to the land laws of Ireland in relation to that point. I hear that the honorable member for Riverton (Mr. McCaughan) hails from that country. If he does so, I am somewhat surprised that he should give his vote against the honorable gentlemen who occupy those benches; because no country in the whole world has suffered so much from bad land laws as Ireland. I hope the picture I am going to paint of scenes which constantly happen there will be before his eyes when he comes to record his vote. I do not care whether he comes from a family in affluent circumstances there; but, whether he does or not, he must know that what I am about to say is true. I have seen his fellow-countrymen, who have left their homes,

standing on the wharves at Liverpool. I have seen old men and women bidding good-bye to their sons and daughters, and shedding tears as they parted from them when the young people were starting on their voyage to this country. Then the time comes when the sons and daughters send for their fathers and mothers to come out. Do they, who spent their sixty or seventy years, perhaps, in the land of their birth, tear themselves from it without feelings of regret? The last Sunday comes, and they part in sadness from their friends. They visit the graveyard where those who have been dear to them lie. They tear themselves from all the old associations, and they come away to this new country. Do they come willingly? Is it of their own free will that they break asunder all these old ties? No; they are driven away. They are driven from their homes by the bad laws which oppress them. I hope honorable members will bear that in mind when they vote on this occasion, and I trust that in years to come we shall not through their votes see the same thing happen here. You may say, "Oh! we have plenty of land;" but I tell you that it will be grasped by the aristocracy that is springing up amongst us. I fear me that, if I were to arise from my grave some fifty or a hundred years hence, I should find the people driven from our shores and going to Victoria and New South Wales, where they are legislating year by year against squattocracy. Such being the case, whom are we to trust with the framing of our laws? Are we to trust to those who in the past have made laws that have led to the springing-up of an aristocracy of landholders here? I say we must not. Look at Victoria. Look at the last division which took place there. The whole Conservative newspaper press—and it is very powerful there; I do not know whether it is corrupt—brought all its weight to bear against Mr. Berry and his Ministry; but the people, with their manhood suffrage, have persistently opposed all attempts to oust that Ministry. They have shown to New Zealand an example that we should copy. When the question of taxation came up, and of an increased tariff, the Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, carried the Reform Bill, and adhered to the Liberal party, even though they had to submit to additional taxation. That is the principle I hope will be acted on here. I hope those honorable gentlemen who represent three hundred electors, or who may represent constituencies of a thousand electors, will bear in mind that, if we had manhood suffrage here, every vote given by myself or by a member for Auckland or a member for Christchurch would be equal to at least three of their votes. If we had manhood suffrage here, we who represent large constituencies should not have to fight for dear life and existence. We should not be compelled to carry on a desperate struggle—so desperate that, one honorable member being absent, we have to use the forms of the House to protract the debate until he arrives. Honorable members on the Opposition benches seem overjoyed at that statement, but I may tell them that the Government is not responsible for the position in which we are. Two days ago an offer was made to pair

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that gentleman, and the Opposition positively refused to do so. They certainly offered as a pair a gentleman whom they thought it would be as well to get rid of—the honorable member for Grey Valley. But that was no proper pair. Why did they not give us a gentleman who was sitting in the House here and who was known to be a pronounced Oppositionist? If they had done so, we should not have been obliged to have recourse to the prescribed rules in order to give time for the absent member to arrive. Therefore the blame for our position lies at the door of the Opposition. I think myself it is only right that we should take a fair and impartial view of this question. I do not think the debate which has taken place is to be regretted, or that it has in any way lowered the position of the House. Neither young nor old members need regret it, nor do I think the electors will regret that it has taken place. It was, in fact, only right that it should take place, because this is really a very serious question we have before us. We find now that the majority of fourteen which there was against the Government last session has been reduced to no majority at all, and I say we had a perfect right to debate the question. I only regret that the Opposition have not replied to the arguments we have adduced. They have simply contented themselves with giving a block vote. I shall be only too glad to see the honorable member for Geraldine, of whose eloquence I have heard a great deal, spring up and tear every word I have spoken to pieces, so that both sides may be placed before the electors. It is only by debates of this kind that we can arrive at a true conclusion. Therefore I say the honorable member for Grey Valley should have waited until the debate took place, and should have listened to the charges made here on the floor of the House, and to the refutation of them, and then should have judged, and not have formed his judgment on an *ex parte* statement outside the House. I trust that in giving his vote every honorable member will exercise it as I intend to do. Neither the Ministry nor the Opposition influence me, but principle. Until the Bills are on the table which are to give effect to the principles laid down in this Address no honorable member has a right to vote against the Government. If I find that the views I express are not carried out when those measures are brought forward, or if they are likely to be detrimental to the interests of the colony, then I shall vote against any Government which brings them in. I am prepared, under present circumstances, to swallow one or two points in this Address with which I do not altogether agree, in order to support the general principle. For instance, there is the clause relating to the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the best routes for railways. I am not satisfied with that, because, if the present Opposition were to get into power, and appoint a Committee to inquire into the railway to the West Coast, I am afraid they would protract their labours until all the money was spent, and there was none left to go on with this work. Another matter with which I do not agree is the paragraph relating to the sale of

Native lands. I do not think we should use the public money of the colony to enhance the value of the Native lands, and thus give the Natives the value of the money we make the white people pay interest for. We should fix a fair value on the land, and then, when it is sold, let the amount be deducted on which the improved value has taken place. The honorable member for Cheviot made a point against the Government that their Bill would entail too much cost on persons in districts like mine to get their names placed on the roll; but the honorable gentleman should remember that that is only a matter of detail. The principle is good, and any defects in detail can be remedied afterwards. Instead of having only one officer in a district, let any number that may be necessary be appointed. Nothing whatever has been said during this debate which would shake my allegiance to the Government. I trust that, whatever may be the result of the vote, it will not lead to the rule of a minority. There has been too much of minority-ruling in New Zealand, and that is why I support the present Government. Taking the whole of the elections, and carefully summing up the candidates elected for and against the Government, and the numbers they respectively represent, I find that the Government has been supported by three to one of the electors. Objection has been especially made to the present Premier as the head of the Government; but I venture to say that, if a vote of the whole colony were taken as to who should be Premier, it would be in favour of that honorable gentleman. That is the test I hurl down to the Opposition. Would the leader of the Opposition carry the vote? Certainly not; and nobody knows it better than those who are sitting round him. I say the Premier of this colony should have the confidence of the whole colony. I believe the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government holds that position; and, such being the case, I intend to vote for him and his Ministry, and maintain them in their present position.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I rise to make a personal explanation on a point about which I have been misunderstood. I am quite sure the honorable member for Hokitika is incapable of wilfully misrepresenting anything I said, but, in speaking of my remarks with regard to the Premier's imbecility, he has mistaken a quotation for an original assertion of mine. What I said was, that I did not, of course, expect that the honorable member for Timaru was going to vote for the Premier after having stated, as reported in the Christchurch and Timaru newspapers, that he would not support the Premier, both on account of the despotic habits which that honorable gentleman had acquired as Governor of the colony, and also of the imbecility which had reached him with his old age.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am not aware that any such statement ever passed my lips.

Mr. WHITAKER.—Sir, I had not intended to take part in this debate, having hoped that the time of the country would not have been wasted so long as it has been by such speeches as we have just heard from the honorable member for

Hokitika. I had hoped that we should have come to a division some two or three days ago, and that honorable members would not have taken up the time of the House by speaking on what I consider a foregone conclusion, the verdict of the country itself having been just taken on the issue before the House. But, having heard this evening that a division would probably not be taken to-night, that there were two or three whales being kept in reserve for to-morrow, and that to-night there would be a chance for the minnows to disport themselves, I thought I would endeavour to give to the House some few reasons why I intend to vote with the Opposition. I did not intend to follow or comment upon the remarks of the honorable gentleman who has preceded me; but I cannot refrain from making one or two remarks in reference to what that honorable member has been saying. I have not the smallest doubt that the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) would have felt highly flattered and highly gratified had the honorable member for Geraldine got up and criticised his extremely voluminous and discursive speech; but we know a great deal better on this side of the House than to fire off a cannon to kill a mosquito. Not that I would call the honorable member for Hokitika a mosquito. It is only a simile. I have been asked to follow the honorable member, and therefore he will not on this occasion be subjected to the criticism of that practised politician and grand speaker, the honorable member for Geraldine. Before I proceed any further, perhaps he will not think it out of place in me as a fellow-young-member if I give him a piece of advice. I have my eye on that clock, and when the minute-hand reaches a quarter-past ten I shall resume my seat. Now, I have been waiting in the House for three-quarters of an hour to deliver myself of what I have to say; I believe the honorable gentleman had been speaking close upon an hour before I came into the House; and I would give him this piece of advice, as I do not think it is at all likely that this House will be again disposed to extend the same courtesy to the honorable gentleman as it has shown him on this occasion; I hope the honorable gentleman will not be offended if I recommend him as a young member to make his addresses a little shorter in future. When I came in the honorable gentleman was referring to Te Whiti. I do not know how he got to Taranaki from Grey Valley; but he appeared to know a great deal about Te Whiti; and from there he travelled to the honorable member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters); and the kindly manner in which he endeavoured to take that gentleman's conscience under his protection amused me immensely. One most remarkable feature about his anxiety on behalf of the honorable member's political morals was this: that the honorable member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters) was spoiling a block vote which the honorable gentleman wished to sell to the Premier and the Government in order to get the Grey Valley Railway. I must confess it struck me that it was not the honorable gentleman's morals which he was looking after, but the Grey Valley Railway. I think the honorable

member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters) has acted wisely in voting as he is going to vote. I noticed particularly, in regard to those extracts that have been read, that he always reserved to himself the right to exercise his discretion upon such matters as came before him with reference to the policy of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. I consider that the extracts that were read gave the fullest liberty to the honorable member to act as he thought fit upon this vote of no confidence. The next time the honorable gentleman who has last spoken tries to look after the morals of a gentleman like the honorable member for Grey Valley, he should not let it be so transparent that the reason he wishes to attach the honorable member to him is, as I have said, for the purpose—I will not say of selling himself, because that would not be in order—but of handing over to the Government a block vote in consideration of a million of money to be spent on the Grey Valley Railway. That is about the hardest abuse I can find in my heart to give to the honorable member. I hope he will take it to heart and profit by it; because we have heard a great deal about purity of elections, Bribery Bills, political bribery, and bribery of all descriptions, and particularly from the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, who, I recollect, administered a very severe rebuke to Sir Julius Vogel with reference to the Wanganui Bridge, at the time when Sir Julius Vogel was standing for Wanganui. I think, therefore, that the honorable gentleman who has just sat down will do well to bear in mind that we do not countenance political bribery in this House, and do not countenance block votes being given in order to obtain grants of money for railways. I shall now proceed to give the reasons why I intend to vote against the Government upon this no-confidence motion. The first thing I shall touch upon will be the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, as framed by Ministers. Now, Sir, I am not at all disposed to admit for one moment that the honorable gentlemen on the other side of the House are the sole patron saints of the sacred cause of liberty. I can only say that, although quite a young man, I have held very advanced Liberal views for the last fifteen years. It is not the first time I have heard arguments adduced in reference to political reforms, in reference to changes in the incidence of taxation, or in reference to land laws. I shall come to these presently, before I conclude my speech; but, in the meantime, I wish to point out, with reference to the Governor's Speech, one particular item in the Liberal platform which has been entirely omitted from the Speech. I will admit the importance of parliamentary reform; I will admit the importance of electoral reform; I admit all these things without hesitation or doubt: but I do say that the first great plank in any Liberal platform in this country is a sound and thorough change in the incidence of taxation. Now, I do not see any mention of that—except in a purely incidental manner—in the whole of the Governor's Speech. I submit that we should have

seen some mention of a change in the shape of an income- and property-tax, or, at all events, some allusion to a practical method of achieving that free breakfast-table of which we have heard so much during the last three or four years. I do not profess, of course, to have the eloquence of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, but I do claim to possess a certain amount of common sense, and a certain honesty of purpose in trying to reduce my views to practice. Now, I have always said that I should like to see some change in the incidence of taxation. It is too late to-night to go fully into the question; but it is perfectly clear that, after all the money we have spent on public works, and the great benefit which has accrued to property from the expenditure of that money, there should be some change; and I confidently expected to see some mention of the subject in the Governor's Speech: but I was disappointed. Therefore I fail to recognize a real Liberal programme in that Speech. One of the most important matters to the people of this colony is the aspect of financial affairs. As yet we have not been able to get a Financial Statement from the Treasurer; I have not seen one, and am not aware that such a Statement is in existence: but I have reason to believe—it has been told to me, at all events, on good authority—that there will be a deficiency of between £300,000 and £400,000 in the revenue for this year. Now, I do not see the slightest indication in the Governor's Speech of what line of policy, what taxation, or what fiscal change is to be proposed in order to meet this enormous deficiency in the revenue. If I could see an inkling of anything at all to give me an idea of how it is going to be done, I should be much more clear in voting on this motion; but I see none. Another thing, I must confess, that I did not like in the Governor's Speech was the way in which Native matters were shirked. If there is a difficulty in the front of us I do like to see that difficulty tackled. I like to take the bull by the horns. I do not like to see a veil attempted to be drawn over what is certainly one of the darkest pages in New Zealand's history. It would have been far more manly, and far more noble, to have come down to this House and told the truth in the Governor's Speech as to how Native affairs stood, and then have suggested a remedy and invited the co-operation of this House. I should not have been one to blame the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government altogether for the present state of Native affairs. I have some little knowledge of those matters, and am aware that things have been drifting for the last seven or eight years—ever since, in my opinion, the passing of the Native Lands Act of 1873—into their present unsatisfactory position. I should not have been inclined to blame those honorable gentlemen who have only been in office for two years. But I think they might have had the honesty to have told us how matters stood in the Governor's Speech, and to have indicated the remedies they proposed to adopt. I do not think the course they have taken in this respect is worthy of a Government, and on that ground alone I do not think they ought to command the support of any

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honest and intelligent politician. There is another very important matter, and I am surprised that the patriots on the other side of the House have not touched upon it more frequently. Considering, however, that many of them have come in here, I will not say in the pocket of a great man, but placarded with the name of the Premier, it is perhaps not to be expected that they should touch upon the flaws in the system which he is adopting, or expose the sores which he has caused on the body politic. They cannot be expected to criticise in a fair and square manner the policy of that honorable gentleman. Therefore I say I am not surprised; but all I ask them now, as Liberals, is, whether they do not consider that a proper spirit of self-government is at the bottom of all true Liberalism. Now, Sir, we all admit that the present Counties Act and the Road Boards Act do not work together. We all admit that our local self-government is defective, and requires a remedy. And yet, in this great Liberal programme I have not seen the slightest indication that any attempt whatever will be made to give the people those rights and privileges which can only be secured by a strong system of local self-government. Local self-government, Sir, is the natural buffer between the centralism which is growing up here now and the people; and we want local bodies, not only as agents by whom the money may be expended, but to be small political organizations which in the times of trouble that may hereafter arise may be the rallying-points for the people in defending their liberties. Such institutions I conceive would be based on true Liberalism. Now, I must confess to a certain amount of jealousy for my part of the country, and I did think that in the Governor's Speech, which professes to be an expression of the sentiments of the Ministry, I should see some mention of a line of railway to be carried out in that part of New Zealand. I thought that, as there was a line to be carried out in the neighbourhood of Marsden, it would have received some slight notice; but there is no mention of it whatever. I am well aware that an honorable gentleman has come down here who is fully prepared to support any Government which will advance that railway, and I believe that he will do so; but I am astonished to see him sitting on the other side of the House, because we now see from the Governor's Speech that Grey Valley is to get a railway, and Marsden is to go without. There ought to have been some mention made of public works; and I cannot help noticing one very important fact, and that is, the entire absence of any reference to the railway from Te Awamutu to Inglewood. That was made a great point of in the policy of the Government—it was considered, in fact, to be the turning-point in the regeneration of the northern part of this Island; but we did not see the slightest reference to it in the Speech. At one time, honorable members will recollect, we heard of nothing else but the enormous success of the Government in acquiring from the Natives a large block of land in the King country, which was to be cut up and sold at astonishing prices, and a

railway to run through it was to be constructed out of the receipts. The line was to run right through the King country, it was to secure the peace of the colony, our securities were to reach an unprecedented figure in the Home money market, the northern portion of New Zealand was to be regenerated, and the millennium was believed to be at hand. But why has all this not come to pass? Is the whole thing a total failure? Will the Natives not allow the line to go through their land? If there is a reason, why not let us know it? The House ought to be kept informed on these subjects. Some mention ought to be made of such an important work in the Governor's Speech; yet I see no allusion to the subject. These are the general reasons why I cannot support the present Government; but there are other grounds, coming closer to my own part of the country, upon which I should oppose any Government of which the Premier is the head. The honorable gentleman has represented the Thames constituency for some time, and the effect of that representation upon the Thames people has been highly gratifying to them; but it has not been gratifying to my constituents, or to the people of the Waikato as a whole. We did at one time get the Premier up to turn the first sod of our railway. We did not get him a silver trowel and a fancy wheelbarrow, and he drove under the same arch that had been erected for the Governor a few days before. So, perhaps, that was the reason we got nothing, while the people at the other end of the line got the money to go on with their part. I know what was said to the County Chairman, Mr. Brodie, but I also know what the money was voted for, and I unhesitatingly assert that the £168,000 was voted for constructing the railway from Hamilton to Omaha. Promises have been made time after time that the railway would be constructed, but it never has been constructed. I should not grumble, but our money has been spent on the other end of the line amongst the constituents of the Premier. I have lived some time at the Thames; I have many friends there, and I have great sympathy with the people, and do not in any way grudge or oppose their line; but I must say that I think it is a peculiar thing that three contracts should have been entered into at that end of the line, and not a single contract at our end. The sod turned by the Premier still lies there in all its solitary nakedness, and the wheelbarrow is in the back-yard of one of the hotels; but we have no railway. Really I do not consider that this is fair; neither do the people feel that they have received justice at the hands of the Government. Now, Sir, I gave notice to-day for the production of the correspondence relating to an endowment for the Borough of the Thames, and I mean to say a few words about that now. I should say that I have had a correspondence with the Government on this subject. I was promised that, in accordance with the clause in the Municipal Corporations Act of 1876, an endowment should be given to the Borough of Hamilton. I suggested that it should be taken out of the Aroha Block, and I was laughed at. I was told that the land was too valuable, and that

it would be cut up for sale. Sir, I am informed—and if I am wrong perhaps the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government will tell off some other member of the Ministry to correct me: I do not suppose that the Premier will himself deign to reply to so insignificant an opponent as myself—that two thousand acres of that block have been converted into an endowment for the Thames. Now, it is not fair that an endowment for my district should be refused, and that the district of the Premier should get it. More than that, we are more closely connected with it than the Thames people, and we certainly had as strong a claim to it as they had. We asked for one thousand acres only, and could not get it; while the Thames people got two thousand acres. That is not dealing fairly with the people, and I can assure the Government that my constituents are very sore about it. Those are what I may call my local reasons for voting against the Government. The honorable member for Auckland City East amused me when he spoke on the subject of the use of the “Hinemoa.” Now, Sir, I think I can recollect something of the opinion expressed by the Premier on this subject, when he occupied a seat on this side of the House. No language could be too strong in denunciation of those who used the “Hinemoa” before the Premier took to using her himself. I did not occupy a seat in this House at the time, but I remember that the language was somewhat remarkable; and, further, it was promised that the steamer was to be sold; and the Ministerial residences were to be sold also. The honorable member for Auckland City East came to the consideration of the subject without any argument whatever, except that he said the Premier would be justified in using the steamer again, and “more power to him.” Now, I do not think that is right. I will never consent to prostitute principles for men, and the fact of there being an eminent man at the head of the Government will not prevent me from saying that their use of the steamer was wrong, and contrary to the first principles of that Liberalism of which the honorable member for Auckland City East is so ardent and eloquent a supporter. If the honorable member for Auckland City East can say that the Premier is right in using the “Hinemoa” almost exclusively for his own purposes, though ostensibly for the purpose of educating the people, and can say “more power to him,” I am perfectly satisfied that he is quite in the wrong. The honorable gentleman can hardly be expected to know very much about Native difficulties, and therefore the “Hinemoa” was a subject more within his comprehension; but when he took up the Ohinemuri difficulty he evidently knew nothing of what he was talking about: in fact, he appealed to honorable members on the other side to tell him something about it. Well, I know something about it, and my version of the story is this. I gathered it from a reliable source, and the difficulty arose in this way, as far as I can learn. Certain Government Natives bought a piece of land from Ngatikoe, Ngatihako being the real owners. I happened to know one gentleman who was asked to go and survey it, and his reply was that, as he had a

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small wife and a large family, and as his life was not insured, he did not care to go and survey it. The Ngatihako land was bought from the wrong owners; and that is the real origin of the difficulty. The honorable gentleman did not seem to know how it occurred, but he said it was very slight; but it was a distinct difficulty between the Ngatihako Tribe and the Government as to whether the Government had bought from the right people or not. Now, Sir, may I say one word about the Native Minister? I was not in the House last session. Had I been here I certainly should have made some remarks about the Kopua meeting, because I do not agree with the way in which the Native Minister was treated by some members of the House: wherever I may stand, my voice shall be used to protect persons from unjust accusations; and I say that the statements made about the Native Minister last session were not true. I was at the meeting from beginning to end. There was no disorder, no disturbance, no superabundance of grog—nothing of the kind. Everything, so far as I saw, was very creditably conducted. As to the political aspects of the meeting we may differ. In that respect, I think it was not successful—I was very much grieved to see the Premier walking up and down the bank of the river, waiting to see a few savages—but these personal charges had no foundation whatever, and I wish it to be placed on record that I took the first opportunity to refute these slanders against a gentleman of whom I entertain the highest opinion. So much for the honorable member for Auckland City East. I will now touch lightly upon the Minister of Mines. I have had the opportunity of knowing that honorable gentleman for some nine or ten years. I think the honorable member for Tuapeka to-day made use of an expression which he was compelled to retract. It referred to another honorable gentleman being an “all-sorts.” I am not going to make use of that expression, because I should probably be called to order if I did; but, if I were to use any particular expression in reference to the Minister of Mines, that would be the expression I should use. I have always looked upon the honorable gentleman as a useful member of the Civil Service, who could be turned to account whenever a Government was in extremity—who, from the position of a Minister in the Legislative Council, descended to the Commissionership of Annuities, again emerged as a Minister in this House, and after all is comfortably provided for at £600 or £800 a year. I was quite prepared to hear a sound, practical speech from the honorable member; and I did hear such a speech. I thought he spoke remarkably well; but judge of my astonishment when I saw him drop the rôle of a first-rate Civil servant, and come out as a democrat. Of all unlikely men I know, he is the most unlikely—from want of enthusiasm—to become a leader of democracy. He appeared to have learnt his speech by heart; and it struck me that he had prepared it for another occasion, but thought it wise—as this might be the last time he could speak from the Government benches—

to give expression to it at once. At all events, it was the most disjointed affair I ever heard. I could not distinguish the first from the last, or the last from the first, and I may say it seemed to be "pumped" out of the honorable member. We always leave the good things to the last, and I just want to say one or two words in reference to the position taken up by the Premier with regard to his so-called Liberal principles: then I have done. I know it will be presumptuous in me to criticise a gentleman who, no doubt, possesses a high Imperial reputation, and for whom I have the highest respect. However, the honorable gentleman, it is well known, is fond of the rising generation and of children, and of seeking wisdom "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," so I have no doubt he will overlook the fact of my being a young man and a young member. From the earliest period that I looked into these matters, I have been deeply imbued with those Liberal principles which the honorable gentleman now claims for the first time as being his own, and I say that in every speech made by the Premier I can recognize the sentiments—expressed in almost the same language—of Carlyle, Froude, and other authors for whose writings I have a profound respect, and of whom I am a humble follower. He has simply taken the contents of their books, and claims that he, and not the gentlemen I have named, is the originator of the sentiments he expresses. I was led to investigate this matter the other day through coming across a speech delivered by the Premier at a public meeting, which was very much like a page or two of Froude's essay on "England and her Colonies." I would like to give the honorable gentleman credit for being copied by Froude; but, on comparing dates, it is only too evident that he must have copied Froude. On investigating the matter further, I found that it was quite a common practice on the part of the honorable gentleman. Before returning to New Zealand on the last occasion I became thoroughly imbued with those principles; I thought about them and, I may say, wrote about them. I therefore object to the honorable gentleman coming before the people of New Zealand—who have not time and opportunity to read and study these matters, and who are not perhaps aware that such a school of thought has existed for fifty years in Europe—and telling them that he is the originator of those principles, and that he alone is fit to carry them out. I say that there are other gentlemen sitting inside this House and outside of it who are more thoroughly desirous of carrying those measures than, and who are fully as able and determined to do so as, the honorable gentleman. I will not give my support to any party that will go back from those principles; but I say that the eternal principles of liberty are not bound up in the life of any one man. Those principles will live and liberal ideas will progress whether the honorable gentleman is at the head of the Government or is on the Opposition benches; whether the honorable gentleman is alive or is in his grave those principles will live, because those principles are eternal. On this point I believe that many honorable mem-

bers on this side of the House thoroughly agree with me. It is the habit to call members on this side of the House "Conservatives." I do not know what a Conservative is, in a progressive country like New Zealand. Does the Premier mean to call the honorable member for Cheviot a Conservative? Does he not know that that honorable member was one of the most liberal and advanced thinkers in New Zealand for many years before he himself came forth from his retirement? There are other gentlemen among the Opposition who have constantly supported and urged the adoption of liberal measures. Does not the Premier remember that twenty-three years ago a gentleman who is not now in this House brought in Bills to give effect to the electoral reforms now proposed? When those Bills were rejected the gentleman I refer to said to the House, "A time will come when you must pass these measures. I tell you our Constitution is democratic. You had better pass these measures now, because, if you do not, they will be forced from you." Those words were used twenty-three years ago, and I say the measures now before us are not new. Then, again, the late member for Grey Valley (Mr. Woolcock) was the first to table a motion in favour of a change in the incidence of taxation. That gentleman was on the Opposition benches last year, but surely he was a liberal man. That is all I have to say upon that point. I sincerely trust we are not to be again treated to those statements by the Premier and his followers that he alone is capable of giving effect to these liberal measures, while we see gentlemen on the Opposition benches who are equally capable of giving effect to them, and who are supported by gentlemen who are equally determined with honorable members opposite to have those measures passed. I cannot refrain, in conclusion, from quoting the following words uttered last year by the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Bryce):—

"There is one curious thing, in regard to the course which the Hon. the Premier takes, which must strike everybody. He takes up this position: that he is going to do good to New Zealand—that he is going to make New Zealand great and free; and the thing itself—that is, the possibility of New Zealand becoming great and free—is quite a secondary consideration: his first thought is that he himself is to make it so. . . . But when a sacrifice is placed upon the pure altar of liberty the priest must not wear the garments of tyranny."

Major TE WHEORO.—Sir, I shall not have much to say to this House, because, as far as I can see, members are divided and voting against each other. If I should ramble beyond the rules of the House, I hope the House will give me consideration, from the fact that I am a new member. I thought it would have been better for the Native Minister to make his speech first, so that I might follow him. Still, it is a hard thing to decide when this debate will be terminated. In the Governor's Speech there is a portion which relates to Native affairs: it is a very important matter about a Bill concerning Native affairs. The evils that have arisen in this Island have

sprung from that source. I think the House should give to the Maoris a certain power that they may themselves conduct their own affairs. It was on these grounds that my constituents sent me to represent them in this House—to consider all the matters that affected them that would be brought up in this House, and to appeal to the members of this House to pass certain measures which would be for their benefit. That is why I consider that all measures that are brought up in any way connected with the Native race should be first circulated among them, or an idea of their nature given to them, so that they may be able to judge and fairly consider them before their final determination here. What I can see in the present debate is this: Europeans *versus* Europeans; they are simply fighting for their own benefit. I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that I came here simply to represent Native matters. Therefore I will say that, whoever brings forward such measures as will conduce to the welfare of the Natives, I am with him.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to be found among the ranks of the apologists for speech in this House. So far as I understand the functions of this House there is essentially and particularly included among them the function of speech, if we are true to our instincts, and do not lapse into a condition of things in which all questions are to be decided in the lobbies before any debate has taken place upon them. We must seriously consider whether such a mode of governing the country is the one best adapted to promote liberty of speech. I hardly think—in spite of the many appearances which indicate that a sudden change has come over us gradually during the last few years—I hardly yet think that, in reality, if honorable members would be true to their own instincts and speak freely their own opinions, they would say that government could be carried out in the lobbies. At any rate, so long as I hold a seat in this House, whatever may be the customs that creep into our proceedings, I shall unhesitatingly, when I think it my duty—when duty to my cause demands some utterance from me; when the interests of my constituents demand it—I shall, Sir, give in this House that utterance, trusting to your kindly patience and the patience of the House. I feel that we have gradually arrived at a turning-point, so to speak, in our legislation, and that the country essentially demands of every one of us that earnest and searching inquiry into not only the condition of our laws, but the condition and history of those who seek to administer them. I cannot look at the question now before us as being simply whether, for some acts of alleged maladministration, the honorable members sitting on the Ministerial benches are to give place to others. Serious as some of those charges are, yet not one of them has such an important bearing in my mind, or is so likely to influence my decision, as the characteristics and the history of the administrators, during the next few years, of our laws, and the creators of new laws essentially needed for our country at the present time. I do not know that I could

characterize the present Ministry particularly as a “provincial” Ministry—that is to say, I can hardly call it an “Auckland” Ministry; but yet it is certainly clear, as has been pointed out already to-night by an honorable member who preceded me, that the Opposition Ministry now to be constituted, provided the Government are beaten, must be essentially a Canterbury Ministry. Now, I would object altogether to a Ministry of that kind. If there was one spot of brightness in the arguments used by those who for years have endeavoured to bring into practical operation the abolition of the provinces, it was the hope that provincial jealousies might cease, and that provincial distinctions might pass away—that the Colonial Parliament and the Colonial Ministry would contain in its ranks the ablest men to be found from one end of the colony to the other, whether they were from Canterbury, Auckland, or Otago. The colonialization of the Land Fund, which we agreed to at a sacrifice, was another cause of hope that provincial jealousies would cease; yet they have not altogether ceased. Still, I would be true to the principle which I hinted at, of supporting the ablest men from any part of the colony, in the hope that these jealousies would wear themselves out. But a Canterbury Ministry, to my mind, has an objectionable feature about it, for this reason: that I do recognize, rightly or wrongly, that the politicians who have sprung from Canterbury during the many years this colony has enjoyed representative institutions have sprung from a class which has brought with it from a country with which we are all proud to be connected those traits of aristocratic government which are inherently vicious in themselves and entirely adverse to all progress and reform. Sir, it is not my intention to follow the honorable member who preceded me before the adjournment of the House. I would, however, venture, with the slight seniority I have in this House over him, to congratulate him and this House upon his accession to our numbers. Not one of us in this House at the present time, in the enjoyable circumstances in which that honorable gentleman has lately found himself, would have expected from him a deeply-thought-out political speech. I say that, not with the idea of undervaluing the ability with which he spoke, but more to congratulate him on the happy position in which he is placed, hoping that, so long as he holds a seat in this House, he will always be as loyal to the country as he has proved himself loyal to the honorable gentleman who for so many years occupied a distinguished position in this House. Nothing pleased me more than the defence—wrongly-founded on every point, completely-unanswerable on every point, though it was—which he endeavoured to put forward for the honorable gentleman who lately sat in this House—the honorable member for Waikato. I speak of his defence simply in reference to the cause from which it sprang. I hope that, as he grows in Liberal ideas, he will be able to discern where true Liberalism may find its truest place. We have had “language” enough in the past. One honorable member has assured the House that for thirty-seven years he has advocated Liberalism.

Major Te Whero

The honorable member for Waikato has advocated Liberalism for more than twenty years. Yet this advocacy has hardly ever proceeded beyond language. It has remained to the present day for the Government, or a member sitting on the Government benches, in his capacity as a Minister, to bring forward measures which he invites Parliament to pass, and which are founded upon the principles he enunciated. It is true that many honorable members who have spoken in this debate—and others who may speak, and who will announce themselves as in the Opposition ranks—it is quite true that they may have been bred in Liberalism, and that they may be as liberal in thought, in wish, and desire as any who sit on this side of the House; yet their views must be influenced by local circumstances, such, for instance, if I may allude to it, as the unfortunate outbreak on the West Coast—such circumstances must influence members in their votes with the party with which they associate themselves. I do not expect to see, in the struggle in which we are now engaged—and which has been going on for many years, at least for the last five years—I do not expect to see any distinct line of division of parties formed in this House, absolutely dividing the Liberals from those who think things best left as they are. But still it is coming about. It has been commenced by the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance), the honorable gentleman who lately sat for Dunedin (Mr. Stout), the Hon. the Premier, and others, among whom I venture to class myself as one. This division of parties has been commenced, and it is going on. At the election when I first stood for a seat in this House, the party numbered sixteen; when I entered this House the party numbered thirty-three; and at the present moment the party may safely be numbered at forty-two or forty-three. There is a steady increase of members bound together more or less by liberal ideas; and it is a satisfactory thing for me to hear member after member getting up on the Opposition side, in addition to our numbers, and claiming to advocate liberal ideas. I hope that, in the course of another year or so, our ranks will still swell, so that the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick), the honorable member for Grey and Bell (Colonel Trimble), and others may see that on this side of the House is not placed and seated all the iniquity in New Zealand—that they may recognize that we have been for years engaged in a struggle in which our whole hearts and sympathies have been bound up, and which we are never prepared to let go, whether we be on the Ministerial side of the House or not; and, recognizing our consistency, and that we have some measure of common honesty about us, I hope we shall very shortly have their support. I have said it must be that local considerations actuate those honorable members, and I am sorry to say, that the most glaring example I am going to adduce comes from my own old province, in which I have lived for nearly seventeen years. It was patent that one of the greatest questions affecting Dunedin at the elections, as preached by the Press, as preached by the Opposition candidates—I think two of them at least—was hardly the question of

liberal reform for which we have been fighting in this House, but whether Addington should have the railway workshops or not, and whether a highly-salaried official should spend his salary in Christchurch or Dunedin. I cannot believe that such questions as those which were represented by the *Otago Daily Times* and its editor in that interview with the Minister for Public Works which we were informed took place—I cannot believe that they animated the public to the extent it is said they did. But when we see such doctrines preached, and the Government opposed, not because its liberality was not believed in in the direction of reform, but because the Minister for Public Works was betraying their interests by not spending money in Otago—when we have such doctrines preached on the hustings and in the Press, we have reason to regret that the great City of Dunedin, whose foundations were laid in liberty, should have descended at the present day to such depths of degradation. Still, I do not wish to reflect—it would be obviously improper to do so—on the members who have been chosen by that city. I wished to give an illustration of what I meant when I said we could not expect all Liberals suddenly to come across on the one side of the House or the other. I would rather have our side gauged by principles and members it does not contain than solely by what it does. Looking through the ranks of honorable members, you will not find one of those go into the lobby with Ministers whose history is mixed up with our struggles against the Conservative interests. Every honorable member whose interests are identified with Conservatism will vote against the Government on this occasion. It is quite true, as has been stated repeatedly in this debate, that we cannot fit and adapt all the doctrines of Liberalism to our circumstances in the language and formulae with which they are adapted at Home; but for many years to come this test of Liberalism—the view taken by honorable members on the question of land and settlement of the people—must be a cardinal feature in the Liberal programme. When I see in the Opposition around me the honorable member who has been for years past the leading political tactician for the pastoral tenants of Canterbury, allied with the honorable member for Roslyn, who has been the champion of the pastoral tenants of Otago, I view with alarm an Administration placed on those benches created by those honorable members. For years in the South we have carried on incessantly, as the honorable member for Parnell has described to us, a war against the pastoral tenants of the Crown and their supporters in the Legislature of the colony. Otago has been true enough to itself, but it was impossible to get the Legislature to carry out liberal land measures, and the leader in resisting Otago's rights has always been the honorable member for Roslyn. I think we can judge of the Opposition, who propose now to submit themselves to criticism by offering to form a Ministry for this country, by analyzing slightly the opinions of their chosen leader. I do not view with regret the reaccession to this Chamber of the honorable member for Selwyn. Far from it. Nor would I view

with anything like feelings of regret the accession of members to this House who honestly believe, as he does, that the franchise is as low as it should be. Any one who holds to a doctrine of paternal government, or who thinks that the people are not fit to judge their own interests, and holds these opinions honestly and adheres to them, is entitled to respect; but I have never been able to give that feeling of respect to the independent candidate of the present day. I do not wish to misrepresent the leader of the Opposition. I have been careful in paying attention to his political career as it has been recorded for us, and I think the honorable member can hardly object to my taking his opinions on the franchise from his speech which he made as a member of the Legislative Council, where he had no constituency to pay attention to, and where it was his duty to the Crown which nominated him to speak the exact opinions which he held. The Hon. John Hall, in 1878—October 8—speaking on the Electoral Bill, said,—

“I am one of those who deny that there is any abstract right on the part of any section of the body politic to any particular share of political power.”

Is there a Liberal sentiment in such an utterance? He goes on,—

“I deny that, because a man has to obey the laws, he has necessarily a right to a voice in the making of them. That is a popular theory; but I have never been able to find that it is founded upon any substantial basis.”

Mr. HALL.—Go on.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—I am going on—in my own time. What I say is, that that is the doctrine of what is called the “Advanced Tory School”—the doctrine of paternal Government. It is the doctrine which says this: “The people are not entitled to any share of the franchise which I, John Hall, do not care to give them. They are not able to judge. They must obey the laws I make, but have no claim to any abstract right by virtue of their manhood.” He went further:—

“I do not believe that government by a few, by a small class, is likely to bring that about. I do not believe that a franchise which shall go so low in the social scale as to practically place the government exclusively in the hands of one class only, the working-class, is likely to bring about the best kind of government.”

The honorable member for Grey and Bell told us last night—and I quite agree with him—that there is no such thing as a working-class, or, rather, that there is no other class. I quite agree with him, but I cannot congratulate him on the opinions of his chosen leader. The honorable member for Selwyn went a little further:—

“If I thought this Bill would cause any great extension of the franchise, I should not be prepared to support it, because I think the franchise is practically low enough.”

Mr. HALL.—Go on.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—Really I cannot undertake to read the whole speech. I am quite willing the honorable member should put in the hands of the member of the Opposition who is to wind up

the debate any extracts from his speeches he may think fair and reasonable.

Mr. HALL.—It is not fair not to read further.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—The thing is unlimited. I really cannot undertake to read any more than the barest extracts. The honorable member told us, also, when he made his speech in moving the amendment, that the Government Bill now proposed would not greatly extend the franchise, and therefore he would support it. That was his reason for supporting it. Now, there is a slight inconsistency here which I cannot avoid noticing. The honorable member for Cheviot was put forward to make a great attack on the Premier. The whole weight of his attack was, that the Premier, by his own autocratic act, deprived fifty thousand or sixty thousand people of the franchise; yet the leader of the Opposition says that the Bill would have extended the franchise hardly at all: if it did—he said in the Legislative Council—he would not support it. It was because it would not extend the franchise, in his opinion, that he allowed it to pass. The member of the Opposition in the Upper House with whom the honorable member for Selwyn was acting did not mince his words so carefully as the honorable member for Selwyn. He told us that if there was any appeal from “Philip drunk to Philip sober” he would resist the Bill, and he brought his hand down on the table before him with great force as he uttered this sentiment. That is the whole doctrine of the Opposition: that the people are not to be trusted—that they can be led away by any one who is eloquent. For the same reason they attempted to pass a resolution in this House, and succeeded in limiting the time during which the elections could be held, mainly to prevent the Premier from visiting the different parts of the colony and addressing the people. The people were not to be trusted. “You are eloquent; they will believe you: we have found you out; but the people are too innocent; you will deceive and take them in.”

Hon. MEMBERS.—Hear, hear.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—I am glad the Opposition cheer that sentiment, because it is the doctrine of Toryism. On this side of the House, we are prepared to trust the people. The honorable member for Waikouaiti may travel the country. I venture to say, on behalf of the Government, that they will place the “Hinemoa” at his disposal. He may travel from Auckland to Invercargill, and let him try his eloquence. We are prepared to trust the people to any extent. The leader of the Opposition has given us another plain statement, a little further back in his political history, by which we are justified in judging the party who have chosen him. In 1869, when the Ballot Bill was before this House—he was then a representative—he said,—

“If the Bill should pass the House of Representatives, he still hoped it would not become law. . . . A Bill more detrimental to the good working of constitutional government he could not possibly conceive. . . . There was hardly a single measure which he should more regret seeing placed upon the Statute Book.”

That was the honorable gentleman's opinion of the Ballot Bill introduced year after year by Mr. Reynolds, and eventually carried into law, to his great credit, by the Parliament of New Zealand, in spite of the opposition of the leader now chosen by the pretended Liberals, the Constitutional party. Before I pass on to other questions, I cannot help referring back to 1868, when the honorable member gave his opinion on the Native franchise. It was in 1867 that the Native dual vote was created, and in 1868 the Hon. John Hall said, discussing the Native franchise, "he believed the balance of advantage rested with the present arrangement." Mr. Fox, it may be interesting to note, recognized fully the constitutional right of the Maori freeholders to their own franchise at that time, and said,—

"He might claim to have been one of the first in this country to advocate the representative rights of the Natives. From the earliest period in which they exercised their rights under the Constitution Act, he had encouraged the Natives to place themselves upon the electoral roll."

I do not care to pursue that question at present; but I may allude to it later, if time has not gone on too far, and if I have not wearied your patience, Sir. I have referred to the leader of the Opposition as the leading tactician of the land ring in Canterbury. That subject was brought rather startlingly to my ear the other night in the speech made by the honorable member for Cheviot. He astonished me by saying that only five thousand acres—he was reported to have said two thousand acres; but I will give him five thousand acres—had been gridironed in Canterbury; and, let me remark, it is rather strange that the two men on that side of the House who may most justly claim to be called Liberals, the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick) and the honorable member for Cheviot (Mr. Saunders), both felt called upon, from the strange company in which they have found themselves, to try and whitewash this gridironing system. The honorable member for Cheviot made an apology by saying it had not reached to any great extent, while the honorable member for Dunedin City compared it with the action of the Provincial Government under Sir John Richardson. Of course the honorable member for Dunedin City cannot understand this gridironing system, because its evil effects were not the result of the action of the Government. It was the action of individual runholders, who placed the gridiron on the runs taken up under laws created by themselves—the men who used the gridiron. It was as if the blacksmith who made the gridiron put it on his own back for his own benefit. There are no maps in the Land Office in Wellington giving any detailed information respecting the land districts in Canterbury, and I find, on inquiry, that, owing to the great delays that have taken place in the surveys in that province—due entirely to the gridironing system and the consequent inaccuracies of the surveys—no reliable maps are to be had here. Still, we have the Road Board maps, such as they are, and they are incomplete and imperfect; yet from them I found, in a few minutes, that, in one

road district, or portion of a road district—that lying between the Levels and the Otaio River—more than five thousand acres are systematically gridironed in one batch. The next map I turned over was that of the South Rakai, and there there were one thousand two hundred acres gridironed in one batch; and so on, in many other districts, lesser or greater areas that are gridironed are to be found. Now, the gridironing system has been often explained in this House. Of course the mathematical plan was seldom put into operation, except in such districts as the Waimate District. What was done was to apply the gridiron to the mouthpieces of the country—isolated patches—and so, by securing the frontage or water-rights, to lock up the whole country for many years to come. On looking over these Road Board district maps I found that even the gridironing system has not been the greatest engine that has been employed by those who made laws for their own benefit. The pre-emptive-right system, according to the maps, has been used in a far more iniquitous manner. That system operates in this way: A fence, of any material, it matters not what, is run in a certain direction—the direction in which the land to be injured can be best injured. In some cases—in many cases—these lines extend for eight, ten, or twelve miles. A width of fifteen chains—often extending only seven and a half chains, or even less, on each side of this fence—is marked off, so that a strip has been, in one case brought under my notice, made to run four and a half miles across the country, and yet only containing five hundred acres to be paid for. In many cases these strips run eight or ten miles. In the Waimate District, near the Waitaki, there are three parallel lines, at intervals of a few miles, cleaving the country right through. The whole extent of this country is pre-empted by merely a few hundred acres, so that thirty miles of country are destroyed for the purposes of the free selector. In Selwyn this has been carried on to a great extent, and the Chairman of Selwyn County can tell the House more about it if he chooses to do so. It is nonsense for any one to apologize for these laws, and it is ridiculous to tell us that only five thousand or ten thousand acres have been destroyed by the agency of these laws. Many years ago I happened to have an ample opportunity of seeing what was going on in Canterbury. It was a sin to go on a run to take up land. If it were known that a party was about to leave Christchurch to take up land at the Waimate, agents would be sent on in advance to apprise the landholders, and the eyes of the district would be picked out and selected before these persons could arrive. There was no hope for any *bond fide* selector at first-hand from the Crown. The only persons who could exercise these land laws against the runholders have been speculators who had influence and weight enough to fight the pastoral tenants of the Crown, and were able to give proper advice to those who paid for information as to how they should invest their money. The *bond fide* selector in Canterbury has never had a show. I have seen men striving

to pick out and secure sections, and, on referring to the maps of the country near the Waitaki and the Rangitata, it was found that there was no water-frontage, and that, although there was plenty of land, it was closed to the selector. I have seen men, in their anxiety to secure shingle land, borrow more than it was possible they ever could repay, so that they were led to ruin simply by the practices which have been constantly carried out by those in Canterbury who made the laws for their own benefit. Before leaving this land question let me allude to Otago. Nothing is more important to Otago at the present time than to prevent by all means the accession to the Ministerial benches of a Canterbury Ministry, supported by the honorable member for Roslyn. In 1882 the pastoral tenancies, to a great extent, throughout Otago expire. The question even now has to be dealt with, how these tenants are to be treated—what consideration they are to receive; and it seems to me that this affects the honorable member for Roslyn in the support he is giving to the Opposition more than the shock his delicate nature received because the Premier chose to address a meeting at Wellington. Yet the honorable member for Roslyn tells his constituents and the people of Otago that that was the wrong-doing which shook his political faith in the Government. His political purity was shocked at an attempt to coerce the freedom and independence of Parliament; and that statement has been repeated, though honorable gentlemen must know that the political situation was never once alluded to at that meeting. It was simply a meeting for advocating the formation of a Liberal Association, and there was no intention of alluding to the political situation. In the attacks that have been made repeatedly upon the Government, what has struck me curiously has been this: that every speaker has begun by asserting acts of alleged maladministration as the reason of his condemnation; yet we are told in the amendment that we are asked to vote that it is the constitution of the Government that is objected to. Because there has been an incrustation of salt upon the tubes of the "Hinemoa," therefore the Government as at present constituted has not the confidence of the House. That really is the logical position in which honorable members are put; and here allow me to point out that the amendment is so worded as in no degree to pledge the Opposition to pass the liberal measures which have been brought forward by the Government. The amendment must have been framed by one accustomed to "run cunning." While they are "prepared to give effect to the liberal measures desired by the country," when they have been seated on the Government benches for a little time, and supporters begin to blame them for not going on with a measure, they could very well turn round and say, "We said we were in favour of such measures as are desired by the country; but in our opinion the measures you speak of are not desired by the country." There is no pledge whatever on the part of the Opposition to support the specific measures brought forward for the first time by the present Government—man-

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hood suffrage on a residential basis, triennial Parliaments, and a redistribution of seats on the basis of population; so that we are justified in looking at past political history in judging the likelihood of their turning round on the teachings of their lives, and honestly supporting the measures of the Ministry of the present day. I know as a matter of history that reform measures have been sometimes carried in England by the Conservative party, when driven to it; but there has at all times been something kept back. Measures supposed to be in accordance with Liberal views, when so passed by the Conservatives have always been found to contain something to prevent full operation being given to the principles they were supposed to contain. There is, for instance, the Agricultural Holdings Act, and there are several Acts in relation to Ireland, which abundantly prove what I say. The honorable gentleman who leads the Opposition is a staunch denominationalist in education, so that those who support him know what to expect from him in that respect. The honorable gentleman was one of those who thought it their duty, and boldly acted up to it, to record in the Journals of the Legislative Council their protest against the passage of our national Education Bill. The protest of the leader of the Opposition was sent Home to England, with a view to get the Act disallowed. The reply, of course, came back in the usual way, that the Imperial Government did not feel justified in regarding the protest of the honorable gentleman.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What a funny thing!

Mr. DE LAUNOY.—Yes, a very funny thing that when the people of the colony now find for the first time that, owing to the action of the honorable member for Kaiapoi, they are enjoying the blessings of national education, a party in this House are to endanger it by their adherence to the leader of the Opposition. Sir, when attacks are made upon the Premier—I think most unfairly—it is forgotten that that honorable gentleman has had to exercise his judgment, and to perform public acts in different capacities. The Premier was Governor of a Crown colony, and had to act under specific instructions. He was Governor of a country with representative institutions, and had to be bound by the advice of his Responsible Advisers. And now we have him amongst us as a free citizen of New Zealand, able and willing to speak in accordance with his own opinions. But the Opposition, without any regard to these distinctions, take up act by act and word by word of the Premier in his past career, and say that, because in 1853 or 1852 he acted and carried on certain things under instructions from the Secretary of State at Home, therefore his instincts cannot be Liberal. This has occurred in more instances than one. The honorable member for Bruce scarcely ever speaks without attacking the Sir George Grey Regulations. The honorable member for Cheviot has always got them in his speeches, and says, "How can you be a Liberal when you were a party to those Regulations?" Again, the charge is made, "You kept back our Constitution. You were an enemy to free institutions. You never even framed the Act

that you say you framed." Even that has been said. I say there is something extremely dishonest in this, if those who make such statements are aware of the facts. As far as I can learn from the records, the truth is, that the seed, so to speak, of this violent Canterbury opposition to the Premier just now was sown many years ago. That opposition arose nearly twenty-seven years ago, and arose on one of those questions which history teaches us have always led to undying animosity. It arose about religion, or, rather, what it was intended to build up religion upon. I find that in 1852 the Governor made a very strong speech in the Legislative Council on this subject. It was proposed by the Canterbury Association to send Home to obtain power to have a large area of country placed at their disposal, under their regulations. This land, according to their regulations, they were to sell at £3 an acre, to any one who would buy it. Of this £3, £1 was to be put aside as an endowment for the Church of England. The Governor, in the Legislative Council, denounced this in these words:—

"Now, as he understood from rumour, it was intended to ask that a further block of, perhaps, three or four millions of acres should be placed under the same regulations; so that the case would then be that, before the whole of this block could be used, £7,000,000 must be paid for the purposes of the Church of England, and no part of it could be used until the proportionate amount due on that portion had been paid. This appeared to involve questions worthy the consideration of all classes in New Zealand, as the power of the humbler classes to acquire properties for their families was involved in it, the amount of the produce of the country was involved in it, and the extent and value of its commerce greatly depended upon it. . . . It did not appear to him to be in accordance with the principle that those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel, because it wrung contributions to a Church from those who were not friendly to that Church, but whose absolute necessities compelled them to buy land necessary for their operations. . . . He would far rather have seen the virtuous and industrious, who could find no place at Home, encouraged to occupy such a country upon terms which would have enabled them easily to acquire homes for themselves and their families, and readily to develop the resources of the country; and to have seen a busy, active clergy, by acts of kindness and Christian virtue, gaining from the members of their own Church in that fertile district a love and gratitude which would readily have yielded ample endowments for all their wants."

The honorable gentleman in that speech used many words and phrases which have become familiar to us in his latter speeches here. I will not detain the House now by reading further, but any honorable gentleman who wishes to see the speech for himself can do so in the volume of the *New Zealand Spectator* for 1851. He pointed out that it was not in the interest of the Church that it should be so built up; and, beyond that, he said, in words which I cannot quote, that it was

a wrong and illegal thing that one denomination should raise £1 an acre from every settler, no matter whether he differed from the tenets of that denomination or not, before he could settle down in the country and form a home. For this, the honorable gentleman was followed with undying hate by the founders of the Canterbury Association, who found a good exponent of their views in the House of Lords in the person of Lord Lyttelton. He said,—

"The principle was as simple as possible: it was to plant a colony whose general character should be of the Church of England, and that £1 out of the £3 per acre that was to be paid for land should be applied to the purposes of the Church of England in the colony. . . . It was against that principle, and that principle alone, that the Governor contended; because he said it would not be acting fairly towards other denominations to have the land dealt with in that way."

That was an instance of the Governor of a Crown colony taking a noble stand in accordance with Liberalism, when he might at any moment be removed by the Conservative Ministry in power. This led to attack after attack being made upon him by Lord Lyttelton in the House of Lords, and by Mr. Adderley and others in the House of Commons. In 1853 the Sir George Grey Regulations came into existence, and Mr. Adderley and Sir John Pakington, in the House of Commons, attacked the Governor furiously on account of those Regulations being issued just before the Constitution Act came into force, which gave the Assembly itself power to pass Regulations.

Mr. HALL.—And quite right too.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—"Quite right!" I am glad the honorable gentleman takes up the same position as Mr. Adderley and Sir John Pakington, because that position was shown to be quite untenable, and it supports what I said at the outset—that that was the seed from which sprang all this opposition. I have got the books here, and if any honorable gentleman wishes to see the exact quotations he can do so; but I think it will be better that I should give them in my own words, leaving out what is not immediately pertinent to the question, but making no unfair omissions. A deputation of gentlemen sent by the Canterbury Association waited on Sir John Pakington in regard to the action of the Governor in the issue of these Regulations. Sir John Pakington chimed in with these gentlemen, and told them they had his authority to go to the Duke of Newcastle, and give him as an authority for saying that the Governor had acted without authority. The gentlemen went, but the Duke of Newcastle expressed his astonishment in these words:—

"I expressed astonishment at these statements, because there was an express clause in the Constitution Act, empowering the Secretary of State to give certain instructions to the Governor, and because I had seen in my own office a despatch from Sir John Pakington giving to Sir George Grey the instructions which the Constitution Act enabled him to give for the purpose of carrying out this very power in reference to waste lands."

Then, lower down in his speech he says—and this was said in the House of Lords a week or two after Sir John Pakington had expressed his ignorance of these instructions—

“This at all events I can positively say: that it was intended by the Government to give those powers, and that instructions in accordance with those powers were issued by Sir John Pakington.”

Then they went into the legality of the transaction; and the Crown Law Officers held that the Constitution Act gave Sir John Pakington power to issue instructions. The Duke of Newcastle said he preferred the authority of the Crown Law Officers—who were, of course, the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General of the day—to the opinion of Mr. Adderley. But I have to quote a little further with regard to these Regulations. The instructions given by Sir John Pakington were held to be full and complete. I had an extract, which I thought I had brought with me, as to the result of these Regulations, but I find I have not. However, I think I remember the substance of it. The Governor, under the instructions of Sir John Pakington, prepared the Regulations and issued them. The desire of the Imperial Parliament was mainly this: The great grievance which then existed in the colony was that, under the New Zealand Company and the Canterbury Association, land could not be procured at a price which could be reasonably paid for it by those who wished to use it simply for its primary purpose—its agricultural produce. The object, of course, of these high prices was what was called, I believe, the Wakefield theory—the idea that those who came out to found an aristocratic settlement should never want labour. That was the idea of high prices. But the colony, as a rule, contained people who wanted land themselves—who held the foolish idea that some of us on this side of the House entertain, that the land is the right of men—that we all have a right in the land—that it is not to be monopolized by a class merely because it is pastoral. We hold that there ought to be, as I understand, free-trade in land: and all such ideas were utterly repulsive to the aristocratic inclinations of the Canterbury Association. Well, Sir, the Regulations were called into being. Now, what do we find was the result of that? Two gentlemen—Mr. Gibbon Wakefield and Mr. Sewell—objected. Every district in the colony, including Banks Peninsula, sent to the Governor expressions of congratulation upon the fact that land was for once within the reach of the colonists. Every district in the colony from end to end joined in that general approval. There was no counter-petition or memorial except that sent by the two gentlemen I have named. I had an enumerated list of the districts which sent those memorials and messages of congratulation, but I have mislaid it. However, it can be found, together with all the particulars I have referred to, by any honorable member or by the Press, in the tenth volume of the House of Commons Papers on New Zealand. We find that the Governor, in sending the Regulations Home, stated to Sir John Pakington,—

“In accordance with the powers conferred

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upon me by the Act to grant a representative Constitution to the Colony of New Zealand, and in conformity with the views and wishes expressed in your despatches, especially those noted in the margin, I have issued the enclosed Proclamation, proclaiming regulations for the future disposal of waste lands, and for the settlement of the various embarrassing questions still outstanding in this country.”

They were absolutely based upon the instructions sent from the Colonial Office, which the Governor had to obey. But, if there was any check at all upon the Governor in that action, his instructions were to this effect: that he was, when the colony was on the eve of representative institutions, to consult the wishes of the people; and as soon as representative institutions were established he was not to interfere with the wishes of the people. And from that sprang another accusation, which has been hurled at the Premier from time to time, quite an unfounded one—the accusation that the lands in the Wairarapa were monopolized by the pastoral tenants under instructions or regulations from the Premier as Governor. The facts are all written in this old history, which any one who chooses can read for himself in the Library. The facts were, that the Governor recommended that only eighty acres, pre-emptive, should be given to the pastoral tenants. At the same time his instructions, which are printed and on record, bound him absolutely to obey the wishes of the provincial institutions which had then been created; and the Superintendent of Wellington chose to send up a message, properly authorized, to the Governor, in which he stated that, in the opinion of the provincial authorities of Wellington, the pre-emptive area should be 640 acres. It was not the Governor at all who gave these large areas in the Wairarapa. All his recommendations in his original despatch were disregarded and set aside in the interests of the pastoral tenants, who then had the monopoly of government in Wellington. I have already quoted the words of the Duke of Newcastle as to the instructions. He is just as emphatic in the matter of the charge which is brought forward, that the Premier as Governor had retarded the bringing into operation of the Constitution Act. It is all printed in *Hansard*. But I wish to give one other quotation from the Under Secretary for the Colonies, in reference to the accusation that the colony is not indebted to the honorable gentleman for its free institutions. Mr. F. Peel said,—

“He must say he had been astonished. Was the honorable gentleman not aware that the Bill which was passed through Parliament to give them free institutions was framed, except in one particular, by Governor Grey himself, and that it was to him that the colonists were indebted for the Constitution which Parliament had granted them?”

The one exception was this: The Premier, who was then Governor, wished that the Legislative Council should contain this elective element, and the Conservative party objected. The honorable member for Cheviot talks of Liberalism, and the views of Liberalism which he has held for thirty-

seven years. I have shown acts of the Premier—acted twenty-seven years ago—in which the true instincts of Liberalism, which he then professed and which he now professes, were attempted to be brought into the actual every-day operations of his career as a Governor of the colony. Sir, we have heard over and over again in this debate of the autocracy of the Premier. In fact, the only charge that has been made, that I have heard, in relation to the constitution of the Government, has been levelled at the Premier himself. He is the blot. The others are very slow, but they are respectable. The Premier is the blot—he is autocratic. When you ask for specific charges, you are told, "Oh! his whole education has led him so that he cannot now get out of it." The very words of Mr. Adderley appear to have been treasured up by these gentlemen, and are now, twenty-seven years after their utterance, adopted as their own. What specific act of autocracy has been charged against the Premier? We have heard of the Luckie appointment; yet the country is aware that the Premier stood alone, and that the Cabinet was on the eve of disruption because the Premier would not give way to the autocratic will of one of his colleagues. We know it was not his act; we know the act was unjustifiable *per se*; we know that no Ministry have a right to take any man, whether he is a member of the Civil Service or not, and put him into a higher-salaried office, when that salary has not been appropriated by Parliament; we know all that: yet was the Premier wrong in resisting that? Will honorable members say that he ought to have carried his idea of the wrong to the extent of breaking up his party, and giving up those hopes which his followers cherished of seeing a Liberal party gradually formed, knowing that his party recognized the honorable member for Rangitikei as one of the brightest ornaments of the Liberal party? I say, No, Sir. What other autocratic act have we had recorded of him? I venture to say—what I have said elsewhere—that it has been in consequence of the Premier's dread of these repeated attacks—of these repeated charges of autocracy—that the Government has not been so united and firm as we might have expected it to have been. If the Premier had taken his position more firmly as Premier, and had put before his colleagues the policy which he had enunciated when in opposition, instead of bringing down what I confess I thought was rather a milk-and-watery policy the first year after he came into office, these causes of disunion would not have arisen. Men would not have grown independent in their own departments, administering departments more at their own will than as the united act of a united Cabinet. There is much to be said to lead us to believe that it has been the Premier's want of autocracy in his own Cabinet more than anything else which has exposed the Government to the charges that are now being brought against it. The actual act of autocracy which has been charged against the Premier I need have no delicacy, I think, in more closely alluding to. I mean the unfortunate resignation of the late Colonial Treasurer. The

Opposition have chosen to take up statements which have appeared in the Press—which they have no warrant for; and upon those statements and charges have based their whole description of the "scene," as they choose to call it, which has disgraced the colony, as they say—of a Premier squabbling with his Treasurer. Now, there were only three parties to that episode—the Premier, the Native Minister, and the Treasurer himself.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The messenger.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—I quite recognize that the honorable member for Egmont, who once held the position of Premier in this colony, has not scrupled to tamper even with messengers to get any scandal or slander he could rake up against his political opponents. Sir, I doubt the existence of that messenger, and I believe that that messenger would have been as honorable as the honorable member himself, and would not have run away to any newspaper office to detail a Ministerial scandal. The fact remains that there are no evidences of the cause which led to the resignation of the Treasurer, beyond that there was a disagreement, as there always must be, more or less. Although many of us have been inclined to blame the late Colonial Treasurer for hastily, as we think, endangering the party which had loyally supported him, which looked to him with hope, and which is still prepared to support him, yet I say that acts done honestly—even if they are rash—will not prevent us from supporting that honorable member, from supporting the Premier, from supporting any one, be he young or old, who will honestly advocate liberal views. It is expected, I believe, by many honorable members who have thrown in their weight with the Opposition, that the result of this division, if carried against the Government, will be a coalition, under which the character of the Ministry will be preserved, and the Premier, and perhaps one or two of his colleagues, will be ejected from office. Now, I believe that we are so far true to our endeavour to form a Liberal party in New Zealand, and gradually to attract from the ranks of the Opposition those who hold similar views, that we, as one man, shall be prepared to stand together. I believe there is not a Minister on the benches or a follower in the ranks who will have anything to do with a coalition Ministry at the present time. Any one who did so would in a great measure destroy the efforts of four or five years, which have now culminated in giving us apparently a majority in this House, and which must, if persevered in, give us a succession of leaders holding liberal views, who will for many years to come have the destinies of this country in their hands. As an Opposition even, if we should be unsuccessful in this division, united, compact, honest, full of hope, we cannot be despised; and I think that within a very short time the new Ministry, formed of those capable men whom we see opposite to us, will find themselves back on the benches which they at present occupy. Sir, for my own part I would gladly welcome a short term in opposition, for I think that those who have joined our ranks of late have not weighed within themselves the necessity for that intense earnestness in our

work which a period in opposition would give us. I think that a short time in opposition—I would not mind a year or two myself—would bring together, organize, and give cohesion to such a Liberal party in New Zealand as could never be upset again. But still, as it is, I have hope that we shall learn even by the risk we are running—that we shall, though our acts are not perfect, of course, still see honorable members, who are now opposite to us, but who hold the views that we hold, gradually attracted to us, anxious to serve with us, and, not the least, rewarding us by at last recognizing that there can be some honesty even in the Liberal party. The Constitutionalists can have it all their own way. A Constitutional party has existed before in New Zealand. The leader of the Opposition, when sitting on the Ministerial benches, found himself opposed to a party led by Mr. Vogel, who called themselves the Constitutional party. Mr. Hall, then Postmaster-General, stated that Mr. Vogel had called his Opposition the Constitutional party, taking the very name which the honorable gentleman and his followers adopt now. Honorable gentlemen may say “No,” but the leader of the Opposition told us the other night that the struggle was between personal power and those who attached themselves to constitutional government. The honorable member for Geraldine again and again told his constituents on the hustings that the struggle was between the Constitutional party and the so-called Liberals, and the leader of the Opposition used the same term the other night. Well, he found himself in 1868 opposed by the so-called Constitutional party of Mr. Vogel. But, said Mr. Hall,—

“He [Mr. Vogel] called the Opposition the ‘Constitutional party;’ but ‘Constitutional party’ may mean anything or nothing, which is what is required. I would suggest, from modern American history, other names—for example, ‘Copperhead party,’ or ‘Know-nothing party.’”

Sir, the Constitutional party of to-day may mean anything or nothing. Constitutional it is, designed speciously to attract all waverers and discontented persons who have grievances against the Ministry. The honorable gentleman is happy in his elocution. He gives us words which we could not use more appropriately against him if we had selected them ourselves. I have one opinion of the honorable gentleman, given by a paper which has risen to be the leading paper in our colonial history—the *Lyttelton Times*—an opinion given many years ago, at a time when, in Canterbury, he was, as has been pointed out, disappointing the hopes of the West Coast which had been entertained of him. The *Lyttelton Times* then said, “When our friend is out of office all is gloom, disaster, and impending ruin, but when he slips back again the sun of Britain’s prosperity gilds every corner of the earth.” I think the cause of the honorable gentleman’s gloom is, that he has been wearying in the Legislative Council; but we are all glad to see him reinstated in health and strength. We are glad to see him again in the ranks of active politicians: but I am afraid that the characteristics of years ago will be repeated again; for, if we should see

Mr. De Lautour

him on the Government benches again, I fear that we should find the old feelings predominant. We should hear him say, “The ballot is a mistake; property is not respected. Let us alone.” And his Treasurer would chime in, “Give us political rest.” I hope, even if it should be for our own good as a party, that the honorable gentleman will not slip in again. I could not frame words tonight to sufficiently express the opinion I feel in regard to the jealousy which these reforms give rise to. I need only refer to the land question in proof of that. I ought also to have said how unfair is the charge made against us that we are opposed to local self-government. What has been our struggle? If the honorable member for Dunedin City will read the history of the last few years, he will find that the object of our struggles has been to give local government to the various outlying districts. I am one of those who despair of honest government being possible in this Parliament so long as a bridge can be used as a bait, or so long as a member can make his allegiance to any Government conditional upon particular works being carried out. That speaks of a state of things in which honest government is impossible; and we have always preached that—none more eloquently than the Minister for Public Works. What nonsense it is, therefore, to talk about the Governor’s Speech not containing reference to this or that policy! The Governor’s Speech is merely one exposition of the policy of the Government. It is in the Statement of the Minister for Public Works that proposals referring to works in particular districts are, and ought to be, found. It is useless for any honorable member to come to this House with the intention of being true to a party, if the element of roads and bridges is to be allowed to interfere with our conception of what the policy and conduct of statesmen should be. Until now we have never had a chance of obtaining a majority in this House. I hold that it would have been better for the Government to have brought down some complete scheme of local government upon the Canadian or the Californian system, and then a redistribution of seats upon the basis of population; but some have thought that it would be impossible to carry such a measure at all, and that we should have been forced to admit such a representation of property as would be disastrous to the people. Country members particularly have to face this difficulty. They are not opposed to redistribution. The country districts say, “We are as liberal as the towns. Simplify your Parliament so that the Parliament shall have nothing to do but to preserve public rights and public liberties; and then we don’t care about the towns: but if you throw in your weight to build up the power of the towns by making population the basis of representation, so long as the Ministry is in the position of doling out support to lukewarm supporters, how can we feel but that we are being left in the lurch?” I hope the House will deal satisfactorily with this question; but, while it is left to individual members to bring back the spoil of the session, honest government is impossible, so great is the temptation to bribe on all sides of the

House. As to the great principles that are at stake, we need not say anything of them to-night. They have been fully expressed on the hustings. The people hope to see free-trade everywhere—they hope to see free-trade in land, they hope to see the incidence of taxation improved, they hope to see abolished that iniquitous system under which the boroughs receive subsidies according to the rateable value of the property within their bounds, and they want to see a state of things in which it will be impossible for a Ministry to speak about an income- and property-tax, or an increase in Customs revenue, while the country is giving 10s. in the pound on the rateable value of property in districts. This farce of subsidies must be put an end to. The people are not much longer to be cajoled with gifts of their own money, with additional charges for collection. We must have a system which will confer a responsibility upon those who raise the money. So long as local districts receive gifts, they not having the responsibility of raising the money, we can only look for these continued scrambles, and we may be sure that we are only laying up for a time of retribution when that responsibility of which I speak must come. I wish to add that I am glad to see such men as the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) come amongst us. If such men as he will only express their thoughts in the same earnest manner as he has done to-night, I can only say from my experience that they will always be listened to, and will reflect credit upon the constituencies which returned them to this House.

The House adjourned at half-past twelve o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 3rd October, 1879.

First Reading—Local Industries—Sydney Exhibition Handbook—Public Trust Office—Address in Reply—Native Affairs.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Administration Bill.

LOCAL INDUSTRIES.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN asked the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, If it is the intention of the Government to introduce, this session, any measures for the protection of manufactures and local industries? He would like to state his reasons for asking this question, as he believed a protective policy was an actual necessity for the prosperity of this country—

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the honorable gentleman was not in order in introducing matter of a debatable kind in putting a question.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN said he had been informed that he could state his reasons, but, as he now found it was contrary to the rule of

the Council, he would simply ask the question standing in his name.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said the subject had already been indicated in His Excellency's Speech, where it was said that it would be referred to a Select Committee for the purpose of deciding whether or not it would be desirable to offer the inducement referred to.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON would be glad if the Hon. the Speaker would explain to what extent a member might go in asking a question.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said it was a universal rule in asking questions that honorable members should avoid introducing matter of a debatable kind. It was competent for an honorable member to give reasons why he asked a question, in order to make it clearer; but it was against all parliamentary usage to introduce debatable matter in the course of his observations. It was very desirable that this rule should be strictly maintained.

SYDNEY EXHIBITION HANDBOOK.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL asked, Whether the Government would direct that copies of "The New Zealand Handbook," prepared for the Sydney Exhibition, should be distributed to members of both Houses of Parliament?

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE agreed to the proposal with great pleasure. It was the intention of the Government to have done so, and he was rather surprised that the actual authority had not reached the proper department, because it had been decided that copies of the work should be distributed amongst members of both branches of the Legislature.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES, in moving the motion standing in his name, said his object in moving in this matter was to ascertain how far the Public Trust Act had been taken advantage of by the public. He took a great interest in the passing of this Bill, feeling that it was calculated to meet a want that was peculiarly felt in this colony, owing to numbers of persons residing here requiring the aid of a trustee, and having, perhaps, few friends in whose hands they could place their property. At that time, and now, he considered that this Act, if carried out as it should be, would be a great boon to the public. It was a well-known fact that one of the great difficulties experienced by parties leaving the colony for a time, or about to make a final exit from the world, was the obtaining the services of suitable parties to represent them. Then, on the other hand, he looked upon it as a most onerous duty, that of taking charge of a large estate, perhaps, and frequently without any remuneration whatever for duties the performance of which, under ordinary circumstances, would cost a large sum of money. He looked upon this as a heavy tax upon friendship, not only on account of the difficulty of performing those duties aright, but also in the risks attending the performance of them. They had a recent instance in the case of the City of Glasgow Bank, where trustees were

found to be personally liable for the calls made upon shares held by them as trustees for some estate in which they had no interest whatever; and many were ruined in consequence. There was another risk, and that was in consequence of incompetent trustees taking charge of property. Besides, there was a probability of the trustees either leaving the colony or dying. He himself had appointed several trustees in his time, and already two of them, younger than himself, were in their graves. It was highly desirable that the existence of this Public Trust Office should be more widely known, and that the benefits of it to the public should be better understood. It was quite possible that estates might be mismanaged, and it was also possible that the parties mismanaging these estates might not be themselves in a position to be responsible for their own acts. In the case of the Public Trust Office, those leaving property had the Government of the country to fall back upon—the Government was responsible for the Trustee. And another great advantage was that the office was perpetual, and one set of trustees would succeed another, and there could be no estate without a proper representative. He hoped that the return which had been laid on the table would contain full particulars of what had been done under this Act, and that the latter part of his motion would be complied with.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That there be laid on the table the yearly return of the Public Trust Office, as provided by section 42 of the Act, with an analysis of the working of the Act from 1872 to 30th June last."—(*Hon. Mr. Holmes.*)

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said the honorable gentleman who made this motion was not perhaps aware that the accounts required by law had been laid on the table of the House on Tuesday last. An "analysis of the working of the Act from 1872 to 30th June last" was now asked for. The honorable gentleman would see that it would be exceedingly difficult to compile such an analysis, without further information as to what he wanted. If the honorable gentleman would wait upon himself (Colonel Whitmore) or the Public Trustee, any analysis he desired would be prepared and laid on the table in the ordinary form. With regard to the general remarks made by the mover of this resolution, he (Colonel Whitmore) did not think it was necessary at present to enter into the general subject of the desirability or advantage of the Public Trust Office. He would only say this: that, as far as it had come within his knowledge, the very greatest possible attention was paid by the officers of that department to the proper care and management of estates within their control, and that very considerable advantage had arisen in many instances from the existence of such an office. It had been, and was still, in contemplation to transfer to that department some other offices of trust, which might be more economically and advantageously combined with the office of the Public Trustee. He thought the honorable gentleman would understand, from what he had said, that he (Colonel Whitmore) was very willing

Hon. Mr. Holmes

to meet him in any direction in which he wished to obtain further information and make the advantages of this office fully known.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE was very glad that his honorable friend Mr. Holmes had brought this subject forward; although, at the same time, as he had scarcely anticipated that there would be any debate upon it that afternoon, he had not taken an opportunity of looking so fully into the question as he should have liked. He still adhered to the opinion he expressed when the Bill was first introduced—namely, that in passing a measure of this kind they were going beyond the legitimate functions of Government; and nothing had since occurred to shake the opinion he then expressed. So far as a public trustee was required for the Government, he thought such an office was desirable; but the Government had no right whatever to appoint an officer to act as trustee for private individuals. When the honorable member referred to the advantage which persons would have when going to England, he knew that the Public Trustee would be the last person he would appoint; and as to his acting for private estates in other capacities, the result of his (Mr. Waterhouse's) observation did not appear to agree with that of his honorable friend. He had seen statements which led him to believe that the advantage was no greater than when estates were left to the management of private individuals; and the expenses were in some cases larger. There was one reason adduced in favour of the appointment of a public trustee some years ago, and that was that, under the then existing law, private persons appointed executors could not receive remuneration, and consequently private friends were not likely to perform responsible duties without adequate remuneration. That law had since been altered, and now it was competent for a Judge of the Supreme Court to grant such remuneration as was fair and reasonable. His honorable friend had referred to the City of Glasgow Bank as affording an illustration of the advantage of having such an officer. No illustration could have been more unfortunate for the argument of the honorable gentleman. If there had been a public trustee in England, the Government of England would have been responsible in that matter. If the Public Trustee appeared on the register of any list of shareholders, insurance company, or bank, not the estate only, but the Government of the colony, would be responsible. That was a position which he did not think the Government ought to take up. He hoped honorable members would devote to this question, when they had seen this return, the consideration it really deserved, and that they would ask themselves whether, in the amended state of the law, the same necessity for the appointment of a public trustee existed now as formerly; and whether, on its own merits, it was desirable that such an office should be maintained.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES, in reply, had no further remarks to make on the subject. All he wanted was to get a return, having an idea that this office was of great advantage to the public. He hoped it might be taken advantage of by a

greater number of people than had taken advantage of it in the past.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I have the honor to inform the Council that His Excellency has been pleased to say that he will receive the Address in Reply at three o'clock to-day.

The Hon. the SPEAKER subsequently informed the Council that, accompanied by several honorable members, he had waited on His Excellency the Governor with the Address, and His Excellency had been pleased to deliver the following reply:—

"I thank you for this Address. It is a satisfaction to me to receive the assurance which it gives that all measures which may be brought before you will meet with your best and most careful consideration."

NATIVE AFFAIRS.

The Hon. Captain FRASER, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that the Native business was becoming heavier and heavier, and, as there was a Native Affairs Committee in the other House, and as Native concerns were very different from ordinary petitions, there ought, in his opinion, to be a special Committee attached to this branch of the Legislature to consider them. He had only put in the names of two of the Maori members, but, as that would appear invidious, he desired to amend his motion by including the names of the three Maori members of the Council, and substituting the name of the Hon. Colonel Whitmore for that of the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, who was so busy on other Committees.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That a Select Committee, to consist of seven members, be appointed to consider all petitions, reports, returns, and other documents relating to affairs specially affecting the Native race that may be brought before this Council, with power to call for persons and papers. The Committee to consist of the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, the Hon. Mr. Tairarua, the Hon. Mr. Ngata, the Hon. Mr. Kohere, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, and the mover."—(*Hon. Captain Fraser.*)

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON thought nothing had been said to show that the Native petitions, which were at present referred to the Petitions Committee, were so numerous that the Petitions Committee itself had not time to attend to them. Having served upon the Petitions Committee for a course of years, he might say that the Committee itself was not overburdened with work. Again, as to the constitution of that Committee, the Hon. Mr. Mantell had declined to serve upon it, and he did not understand the Hon. Captain Fraser to say that he was willing to serve on this Committee. He did not think there was any case made out for the appointment of so large a Committee as this. The Hon. Captain Fraser stated that none of the Native members of the Council were on the Petitions Committee.

The Hon. Captain FRASER wished to correct

the honorable member. What he said was, that in the other branch of the Legislature none of the Maori members were on the Public Petitions Committee.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON had misunderstood the honorable member. He would merely now propose that the Committee be appointed by ballot, in the same manner as the Petitions Committee had been appointed.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE said the only thought that struck him in this matter was, that neither the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, nor the Hon. Captain Fraser knew anything about Native affairs; and that was the only objection he could see to their names being on this Committee. It was necessary that there should be on that Committee honorable members who knew something about Native matters, otherwise its members would be guided by principles of abstract justice. What was required on this Committee was men who understood the complex questions coming before them, and who would be guided by their common sense only.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES said that, before this Committee was proposed, he raised the objection with regard to himself that he knew nothing whatever concerning Maori questions, and that therefore he thought himself incompetent for the position. But he was told that this was the very best reason why he should be on such a Committee, as he would deal with matters entirely on their merits, and free from any bias. Upon that understanding he allowed his name to be included in the Committee.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE thought that, as the Committee was going to be elected by ballot, it was unnecessary to make any particular remarks about the competency of any particular gentlemen; but he wished to add his evidence to this fact: that, in Native affairs, it was highly desirable there should be a very fair leaven of gentlemen who were not at all mixed up with them, and who, he believed, would give a very impartial verdict. While the Committee should contain the names of gentlemen who were acquainted with the European and Maori sides of any question, he thought it should also include some honorable gentlemen who, while they knew little or nothing of Native matters, had sufficient common sense, knowledge of business, and the fair-play of Englishmen, to place them above the suspicion of bias. In exercising his privilege of ballot, he would endeavour so to arrange his list of names that it would present all elements which were calculated to make a good Committee. He thought it desirable there should be a separate Committee on Native petitions. The Natives every day were taking a larger interest in politics, and a greater share in them; and, if they found that their petitions were considered in Parliament, he thought that would have a civilizing influence upon them, and would prevent them taking the law into their own hands as they had done in the past.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT felt inclined to agree to the ballot; but he objected to the three Maori members being on the Committee. The quorum of the Committee would be five,

and, if that number only attended, and the three Maori members were present, the Maori side would have the preponderance of representation on the Committee. It would not be right or just to have it so. He dissented from the proposal.

The Hon. Captain FRASER, in reply, had not the slightest objection to the ballot, so long as the Committee was formed. With respect to the observation of the Hon. Colonel Brett as to the three Maori members being on the Committee, it would be invidious to leave out the name of any Maori member. With regard to the observations of the Hon. Dr. Grace as to his (the Hon. Captain Fraser's) knowing nothing about Native affairs, the honorable member would find that the Natives on the east and west coasts of the North Island, and all the Natives of the South, had considerable confidence in his sense of justice. His object was to get this Committee appointed.

A ballot was taken, and it resulted in the appointment of the following gentlemen as members of the Committee: The Hon. Mr. Ngatata, the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa, the Hon. Mr. Mantell, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. Kohere, the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, and the Hon. Captain Fraser.

The Council adjourned at three minutes past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 3rd October, 1879.

First Readings—Personal Explanation—Thames Natives—Waste Lands Boards—Government Steamers—Ballast-Train Employés—Customs and Land Revenue—Southland Crown Lands—Government Contracts—Civil Service Appointments—Sir Julius Vogel—Ngaruawahia Suburban Lands—Railway Employés—Jury Laws—Warden for Wairarapa—Address in Reply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Abolition of Imprisonment for Debt Bill, Debtors and Creditors Act Amendment Bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. BROWN asked leave to put a question without notice. He wished to ask the Postmaster-General, if the Government steamer "Luna" had the San Francisco mail on board when she left Wellington on the 31st August, 1872, as stated on the previous day by the honorable member for Selwyn?

Mr. HALL.—I wish to call attention to the fact that the statement in the proposed question is not correct. I did not say she went on the 31st August. I did not state any date.

Mr. BROWN.—The honorable member did not mention dates, but the "Luna" left on that date.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Selwyn denies that he made the statement, and the House will of course accept his denial.

Hon. Colonel Brett

Mr. BROWN.—I am quite satisfied with his withdrawal.

Mr. HALL.—I will not condescend to a personal altercation in this matter; but I appeal to honorable members to say whether I have made any withdrawal of the statement I made yesterday.

Mr. BROWN.—Then I will ask the question in this form: Whether the Government steamer "Luna" had the San Francisco mail on board when she left Wellington on the 31st August, 1872?

Mr. J. T. FISHER said that on the occasion of the "Luna" sailing south on the 31st August, 1872, she did not convey the southern portion of the inward San Francisco mails, which reached Auckland by the "Nevada" on the 28th August. The "Luna" sailed from Wellington for Port Chalmers direct for the purpose of bringing up the outward mails for transmission *via* San Francisco. She left Port Chalmers on the 2nd September, and delivered the mails at the Manukau by way of intermediate ports on the 7th, connecting with the "Nevada." The "Nevada's" inward mails from San Francisco—the steamer having been quarantined at Auckland—were conveyed from the Manukau to Wellington by the "Wellington," and the southern portion transhipped to the "Rangitoto," which sailed for Lyttelton on the 1st September, the day after the "Luna" had sailed for Port Chalmers.

THAMES NATIVES.

Mr. WHYTE asked the Government, Whether they are aware that the navigation on the Thames River has been stopped by the Natives; and, if so, what steps they intend to take, if any, to keep open that important highway of communication? He put the question because he had heard on good authority that the navigation of steamers in the Thames River had been stopped.

Sir G. GREY replied that the Native Minister would state all the facts of the case when he addressed the House presently.

WASTE LANDS BOARDS.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked the Government, Whether it is their intention, in connection with their proposed land legislation, to introduce a measure of reform in the Waste Lands Boards of the colony; and, if so, will the Minister of Lands indicate the direction in which such reform will shape itself?

Mr. THOMSON replied that suggestions as to reforms in the Land Board system had been made to the Government by several members of the House. The Government had had the matter under consideration, and he hoped to be able, on the occasion of the second reading of the Land Bill which he had introduced, to state the views of the Government on the subject.

GOVERNMENT STEAMERS.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked the Government, If they will be prepared to call for tenders for the repairs of the Government steamers, as for other public works and repairs? He might be allowed to explain that there were several tradesmen in

Wellington quite capable of doing any work of the kind referred to in the question, and it would only be fair on the part of the Government to those tradesmen that work of this kind should be let by public tender, the same as any other work.

Sir G. GREY agreed with the remarks of the honorable gentleman; and in all possible cases tenders would be called for. It sometimes happened that a particular work was required to be done in a great hurry; but, in all cases where possible, tenders would be invited.

BALLAST-TRAIN EMPLOYÉS.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether there is any foundation for statements made that a number of men have been dismissed from their employment on the ballast-train on the Canterbury section of the New Zealand railways, and that prison labour has since been employed on that duty?

Mr. MACANDREW replied that some days ago he had received a communication from a number of working-men in Christchurch, complaining that the employment of prisoners had been interfering with their labour. On inquiry the Commissioner of Railways had wired to him as follows:—

“Employment in ditching, stonebreaking, and weeding on the railway has been given to the prisoners in Addington Gaol. The gaoler represented that he had no work for his hard-labour men, and would be glad if employment could be provided for them within a mile radius of the gaol. Works have been done by them for which no funds were available, and which would not have been executed had the chance of employing prison labour not presented itself. Thirty is the maximum number of men employed.”

He would like to be allowed to state that this reply was in answer to an inquiry he had made some two or three days ago. He would make still further inquiries with special reference to the honorable gentleman's question, and would communicate the result of those inquiries.

CUSTOMS AND LAND REVENUE.

Mr. McLEAN asked the Colonial Treasurer, If he will lay before this House a statement showing receipts from Customs revenue for quarter ending 30th September, 1879; also receipts from land revenue for same period?

Sir G. GREY replied that he had the return which the honorable gentleman asked for, and it would be laid on the table. He would simply observe that, the returns from several ports having been sent in by telegraph, it was possible that some slight inaccuracies might have taken place, but they must be very slight indeed.

SOUTHLAND CROWN LANDS.

Mr. BAIN asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the report of Mr. Pearson, Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands for Southland, in the appendix to the report of the Secretary of Crown Lands, is a full copy of the original report; and, if not, whether he will have any objection to lay the complete report before this House?

Mr. THOMSON replied that Mr. Pearson's report, in the appendix to the report of the Secretary of Crown Lands, was a full copy of the original report. Mr. Pearson had, however, sent in a report to the department regarding the success of the deferred-payment system in the Southland District. He understood that that was the report referred to in the question, and he hoped to be able to lay a copy of it on the table next sitting-day.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

Mr. SWANSON asked the Government, What steps (if any) they intend taking to enforce compliance with clause 23 of the Conditions in Government contracts? He might explain that this was the clause in the contract-bond which provided that the workmen should be paid once a fortnight; and for every practical purpose it had remained a dead-letter. He desired to know what the Government intended to do in the matter.

Mr. MACANDREW said it was quite true that clause 23 provided for the payment of workmen once a fortnight. It also provided that, if the contractor committed or allowed any breach of this clause, he subjected himself to a penalty of £50, to be recovered without process of law. That penalty might be deducted from any moneys due to the contractor. It was, therefore, only necessary to notify to the contractor that the provisions of this clause would be rigidly enforced for the future, to insure compliance therewith. He intended to give such notification. He might state that no complaint had been made as to the infringement of this clause hitherto. Had such a complaint been made the Government would have seen that the provisions of the clause were strictly carried out.

Mr. SWANSON could assure the honorable gentleman that great complaints had been made about this matter.

Mr. MACANDREW said that if persons made their complaints to the Government they would find that the grievance would be remedied. If the workmen were not paid in accordance with the provisions of this clause, they had only to represent the matter to the proper authorities, when immediate action would be taken by the Government.

CIVIL SERVICE APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. BOWEN asked the Premier, If he will lay before this House a return of all persons appointed since the prorogation of the late Parliament to any paid office or position of emolument under Government; stating in each case the nature of the office, whether temporary or permanent, and the emolument attached to it?

Sir G. GREY said the return asked for by the honorable gentleman would be furnished if he really desired it; but he was afraid it would give a considerable amount of trouble. It would refer to persons employed on the railways, and they were varying from day to day. If a return were asked for without reference to the employés in the Railway Department, it could be furnished almost immediately.

Mr. BOWEN said, if the return gave those persons permanently employed on the railways it would be sufficient.

Sir G. GREY said it would take some time to furnish the return.

SIR JULIUS VOGEL.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, If Sir Julius Vogel applied to them for leave to stand for the representation of an English constituency in the House of Commons; if so, was such permission refused, and why; and if the Government will cause any papers and information they have upon the subject to be laid before this House? As so many rumours were current about this matter, he should be glad if the Government would give an authoritative statement regarding it.

Sir G. GREY said the Government had not received any application from Sir Julius Vogel for leave to stand for an English constituency; but the Government, hearing that Sir Julius Vogel was about to stand for an English constituency, had telegraphed to him their opinion, which was that the Agent-General ought not to be allowed to be a member of the British Parliament. They came to this conclusion because they thought that his taking such a position would distract his mind from his other duties, and would be lending the weight of his office, which was considerable in England, to a particular party in Great Britain; that it was not desirable that the colony should be involved by any such officer entering into British politics or the politics of any other country; that upon the whole the Government thought it better that the Agent-General for New Zealand should not be in Parliament; and they could not give their consent to a member of Parliament holding the office of Agent-General. That was the only paper that passed on the subject, and it contained what he had just stated to the House.

Mr. MURRAY asked if the honorable gentleman would lay the document on the table of the House.

Sir G. GREY said the telegram contained in a shorter form exactly what he had stated. The purport of it was, that the Government could not approve of its Agent-General being a member of the House of Commons.

NGARUAWAHIA SUBURBAN LANDS.

Mr. WHITAKER asked the Minister of Lands, What steps (if any) have been taken to open up the suburban allotments in the vicinity of the Township of Ngaruawahia; and what length of time will probably elapse before such steps may be expected to produce the desired result? He had been induced to put this question in consequence of the reply given to a question he had put on a previous day.

Mr. THOMSON replied that the matter had been referred to the Native Department, in order to ascertain what blocks had been promised to the Natives. As soon as that information had been obtained the land in question would be opened to the public.

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RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. ANDREWS asked the Minister for Public Works, If all the employes on the Government railways are treated in a uniform manner as regards hours of work and rates of pay; if a uniform working-day exists, of eight hours; if any exception exists, and to whom does it apply; if a uniform rate of pay exists for similar services given; if there is any fixed rule for the payment for overtime, and, if so, what that rule is, and is it observed in all cases?

Mr. MACANDREW wished to lay on the table a copy of the regulations, which he had only just received. He would examine the document, and then lay it on the table. He thought that would be the best answer to the question. A good deal of misapprehension seemed to exist on this subject, and it was desirable that the actual regulations themselves should be published. That would remove all misapprehension.

JURY LAWS.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked the Government, Whether they intend to introduce a further reform in the jury laws, more especially (1) by the abolition of the Grand Jury system, (2) by an improvement of the Coroner's inquest by jury, and (3) by an increase of the payment to common jurors?

Sir G. GREY replied that the whole of the points referred to by the honorable gentleman were under the consideration of the Government, and a Bill was being prepared to give effect to some of them.

WARDEN FOR WAIRARAPA.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Justice, If it is the intention of the Government to open a Warden's office and appoint a Warden for the Wairarapa District? He might state that, from reliable information received, there was likely to be a valuable gold field opened up in the Wairarapa District.

Mr. GISBORNE replied that as soon as the land had been proclaimed a gold field under the Mining Act arrangements would be made to appoint proper officers to receive applications for mining claims connected with the gold field. It would be unadvisable to proclaim the land a gold field until they had received some well-ascertained information that the district was probably auriferous. Mr. Cox, the Assistant Geologist, would proceed next day to the district, in order to report upon the matter.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. BOWEN.—Sir, when an honorable gentleman, in addressing the House on an important question like this, begins by endeavouring to create a prejudice against his opponents, on the ground that they reside in a particular district or belong to a particular class of persons, I think it is a distinct sign of weakness. Therefore the attack made upon the leader of the Opposition last night by the honorable member for Mount Ida, on the ground that he is a Canterbury man—a man belonging to a particular province—very consider-

ably weakened the cause which he attempted to advocate. If he believed in popular government, in the representation of distinct principles by gentlemen who are trusted by the people, then he had no right whatever to throw out any such insinuations against my honorable friend as he did. The honorable member for Selwyn has been returned by a large constituency, where there was every attempt made by the Government party to get some one to oppose him from outside, but they were unable to do so. And I can say this: that there is scarcely a constituency in the whole Province of Canterbury, where the honorable gentleman has been so well known for more than a quarter of a century, which would not have returned him with acclamation. When this is the case, I think it is perfectly absurd for men who pretend to advocate popular views, and to advocate that principles should be represented by men who are the representatives of the people, to attempt to prejudice the House against a gentleman who can get such support from the people who have known him thoroughly for a long time. He is not only known to the people of Canterbury, but he is known to all the people of the colony; and I will undertake to say that, from one end of the colony to the other, and in every province throughout the colony, it was learned with satisfaction that my honorable friend again represents a constituency in this Assembly, and has been chosen to lead one of the parties in the House. I shall not dwell upon the attempt to fasten odium upon the Canterbury members. They have been very unwilling to have themselves or their affairs dragged constantly before the House as they have been for some time past—for Goodness knows what reasons. But the honorable gentleman must be aware that there have been the grossest misrepresentations as to the actions of the Canterbury members, especially with regard to the land laws of that province, for the last five years. I am not going to weary the House with the story of the Canterbury land laws; but I will say this, that they were founded upon the soundest and most liberal principles, and that they are the only laws which have really and truly settled the people upon the land: for it will be seen that, according to the census returns, there are more yeomen—more men who are cultivating and owning land themselves—in Canterbury than in any other part of New Zealand; and this is entirely owing to the Canterbury land laws. But it is true that there was a large portion of Canterbury which, in the early days, was excluded from the operation of the Canterbury land laws; and that in that part of the country large properties have been created, which might have been better divided among a larger number of people, and, consequently, held in smaller allotments; but the entire fault of this lies with the honorable gentleman who is now at the head of the Government. The honorable member for Mount Ida very ingeniously and very insidiously tried to mix up the request of certain inhabitants of Canterbury in 1852 with the transaction which took place in 1853, when the Premier issued his celebrated Proclamation.

In 1852 some Canterbury people endeavoured to get the block extended which they held under the rules of the Canterbury Association; but certainly this had nothing to do with the issue of a Proclamation in 1853 by the honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government. It will be remembered that in 1853 the new Constitution was proclaimed; and, if there was one thing in that Constitution at which the people of New Zealand rejoiced, it was at the fact that, for the first time in the history of the colonies of England, the whole control of the waste lands was handed over to the people of the country in which the lands were situated. But what was the conduct of the Governor of that time? He stepped in between the passing of the Act and the time when it was proclaimed, and took the opportunity of legislating himself, without reference to the voice of the people, in such a manner as to give away the waste lands of the Crown, with the result that the land passed into the hands of monopolists. It is perfectly amazing, to any one who remembers the circumstances under which that was done, to see that honorable gentleman stand up in this House night after night, and on public platforms during the recess, day after day, hounding down the Canterbury members because of these large estates. It was he who created these estates, and no one else; and not merely without reference to the Legislature, but absolutely in spite of the protests of the people, and in spite of an injunction of the Supreme Court. There was immense disappointment felt, especially in Otago and Canterbury, when this Proclamation was issued.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Hear, hear.

Mr. BOWEN.—I am glad to hear the honorable member give that cheer, because he knows it well, and suffered in consequence. I know there was immense indignation both in Canterbury and in Otago;—an appeal was made to the Supreme Court, and in the celebrated case of *Dorset v. Bell* an *ex parte* application for an injunction to restrain the Governor's action was made to the Bench in Wellington. What did the Governor do? He refused to plead; he would have nothing to do with the Supreme Court: but nevertheless the Judge said he thought the action of the Governor was illegal, and granted an injunction. But the Governor ignored the Supreme Court, and treated it with contempt, as he has done since; and, departing from the colony, he left in operation this law, which gave away the waste lands of the Crown within five months of the meeting of the Legislature. He and he alone gave away the waste lands of the Crown, for there was precious little to give away after he had done this.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. BOWEN.—I say Yes, because, although the Legislature met shortly afterwards, everybody knows how difficult it is to raise the price of land, especially when there is very little money in the country. Now the people have their eyes open, because there is money and there are plenty of speculators; but the eyes of the country were not then open. No doubt the Governor was attracted by the popular cry in some parts of the

colony to make land cheap; but he was not an enlightened Liberal fighting for the good of the people then. I may say, further, that there is a gentleman residing in this province—an old settler, a man of credibility, and well known in the country—who has declared that in a conversation with the Governor of that day His Excellency said he thought it would be advisable that a class of landed gentry should be created in this country similar to that which exists in England. Well, this is not exactly the view he has since promulgated, and it is rather amazing. I am not going to charge him with saying anything improper in those days, but I do accuse him of insincerity in attacking the Canterbury members as he does. With regard to the land regulations in Canterbury, I may say, without going into details, that the honorable member for Mount Ida is perfectly mistaken in stating that the pastoral licenses which have been given in the Canterbury Province were a scheme of the Canterbury Association. They were simply created by the necessity which arose owing to the large quantities of land lying absolutely idle and unused, and which the agent of the Association found it necessary to utilize. An arrangement was made, and the terms for occupying the lands were so fixed as to prevent anybody having a monopoly of the land. The terms were considered hard, and, indeed, they were such that very few men could take up land on pastoral license at that time. Many of those who did take up land on this system were simply ruined altogether, and those who succeeded did so in consequence of their hard work, and for a long time led a life of downright hardship, more severe than that of men who have followed any other pursuit in this colony. And now, at this time, when all this outcry is made against the pastoral settlers, I would ask, Who are they? There are very few indeed of them left, and those who are left are struggling with country that very few settlers would like to go upon. The thing is absolutely ridiculous. Talk about putting freehold settlers on a hundred acres of mountain-sides to starve! Everybody who knows the country, everybody who gives the matter the slightest thought, knows that the whole thing is a perfect farce—a mere claptrap outcry to try and get a little cheap popularity. And the proof is, that the cry does not come from Canterbury. Every possible effort has been made to teach this doctrine to the people there, but they cannot believe it. Every candidate from that part of the country for the last three years has had that question out on the hustings, and the people have indorsed the acts of their representatives. To show how little the honorable member knows about the so-called gridironing of the country, it may surprise him to hear that the very case at the Rakaia which he brought forward as an instance was a case in which an outsider gridironed a runholder's land to the extent of 1,200 acres, with a view of compelling him to sell his run. The honorable gentleman said that when the present Premier issued the Land Regulations of 1853 he did so under instructions from the Colonial Office. I give the honorable gentleman

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credit for believing that statement to be correct when he made it, but he is absolutely misinformed as to the circumstances of the case. The fact is, that there were no instructions to sell the land at a particular price. The case was this: By the 72nd section of the Constitution Act power was given to the Assembly to deal with the waste lands of the Crown. There was a proviso to that section. By the Constitution Act the Assembly had power to make laws for dealing with the waste lands; and the proviso was that, until this Legislature came into being, the Governor should have power to regulate the sale of waste lands under instructions under the sign manual. It was claimed that these instructions were forwarded in a despatch from Sir John Pakington, giving the Governor power to make regulations under the existing law for carrying on the land sales of the country; but there was not the least idea that the Governor was, within a few months of the opening of Parliament, to alter the whole price of the waste lands of the Crown against the interests of those who in the New Zealand Company's settlements had bought land at £1 an acre, who in Canterbury had paid £3 an acre for it, and who in Otago had paid £2 an acre for it. I said before that this action was not a liberal action; and I may say, with regard to the whole cry of liberality, so much affected just now, that what disgusts honorable members on this side of the House is the absolute imposture of the whole position taken up by the so-called Liberal party. A great deal has been said about "party lines" being drawn. I should like to know what they are. I venture to say that if you were to throw such a question as that of free-trade into your "party lines" there would at once be the utmost confusion. The honorable member for Grey and Bell, in a speech which I am sure every one in the House was glad to hear, and which was very instructive, gave us some idea of what a man who has come fresh from the great burning questions of Liberalism and Conservatism in England thinks of the cry out here. I venture to say that if even Mr. Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal party at Home, or such a man as the late Mr. John Stuart Mill, or any other of the great Liberal leaders in England, were to come out here and propound his views on the subjects now before this country, he would be hooted down as a rank Conservative by those who are ready to raise a popular cry. But a popular cry is not necessarily a Liberal cry. We have plenty of illiberal cries made popular to the people when hounded on by demagogic action. Sir, the honorable member for Mount Ida picked out a few extracts from the speech of my honorable friend the member for Selwyn, when he was in the Legislative Council, delivered in reply to one made by that distinguished leader of the Liberals the Colonial Secretary. The honorable gentleman picked out these extracts and used them without any context, and asked the House to condemn my honorable friend in consequence as a rank Tory. It is very easy to pick extracts out of a speech, and, without giving the context, ask the House to form a judgment upon them; but it is not so easy to get the House to form a judgment

on such grounds. There are, no doubt, differences of opinion on this side of the House on many matters, just as there are on the other side; but one is really amazed to hear supporters of a Government which is, I suppose, about the most patchwork Government that ever sat upon those benches—and when I say “patchwork” I mean the most extraordinary mixture of ideas and opinions that has ever been got together—it is amazing, I repeat, to hear a supporter of such a Government talking about the incongruous elements of this side of the House. There may be differences of opinion amongst us—there must be differences of opinion amongst us; but I venture to say there are fewer differences of opinion amongst all the supporters of my honorable friend the member for Selwyn than there are amongst the first half-dozen gentlemen whom you may chance to pick out on the other side. We need not go back to what they said six or seven years ago, but to what they have said within the last few months, to prove this. Amongst other things we are told that triennial Parliaments is one of the leading principles of their platform. Look at the Minister of Lands. Does he believe in that principle? Why, he told us only a few months ago that he was most strongly opposed to it. I could go through many other instances of the most amazing differences of opinion amongst those honorable gentlemen, but I do not think it is at all necessary to do so, and I do not wish to take up the time of the House. It is absolutely absurd and ridiculous to talk about party lines here. The fact is, there can be no permanent party lines in a new country. Parties must be formed as circumstances arise. Parties have been formed for a time when such questions as the abolition of provinces have come before us, and this will occur again when such questions as Free-trade and Protection are before the country; but to say that there are a Liberal party and a Conservative party in a country where nothing has yet arisen to conserve is simply absurd. It is absurd for the honorable gentleman to say that hitherto Liberalism has only been in language, and that now, under the present Government, it is action. I should reverse that, and say that Liberalism has hitherto been action and now is only talk. Take, for example, the land laws of the colony. The Constitution Act gave the people power to deal with the land, and they have done so. In 1877 the most liberal land law that was ever produced in this colony, or in any of the Australian Colonies, was brought down by Mr. Donald Reid. He is not now a member of the House: I regret it, and I am sure every member of the House must regret it, for he was one of the most distinguished defenders of free and liberal land laws that ever lived in this country. When he brought down this measure, who was the strongest opponent of it? Sir, it was the Premier. He was not merely the Parliamentary opponent of it, but he was the unconstitutional opponent of it behind the scenes, and he endeavoured to burke that measure secretly because there was something in it of which he did not approve. Unfortunately, that something was a Canterbury question, which appears to be

his *blâc noir*. He thought it his duty, after that measure had passed both branches of the Legislature, to advise the Governor to veto it, in order that he might get his own way in spite of Parliament and colleagues. And what is the most serious part of the business is, that he comes down now and says he would do it again. I wish to draw particular attention to that fact, and to ask whether we can possibly believe that an honorable gentleman understands what true constitutional government is, who, having done such an act as that, comes down here and says he would do it again. And I have no doubt he would. To those honorable gentlemen who say that nothing very serious has been brought against the Government, I would say, Let them consider those words—that in cold blood, after mature consideration, after full discussion, when his own party have condemned him, when every person has agreed that his act was most unconstitutional, the honorable gentleman says, “I would do it again.” The fact of the matter is, it is only of a piece with the utter contempt for the control of Parliament which this Government have shown throughout. If honorable gentlemen ask, “What have the Government done to be turned out of office?” I say, Such an act as that, in defiance of the will of Parliament, would be in any other country sufficient to unseat them. But that is not the only occasion on which the honorable gentleman who has declaimed so loudly about Liberalism has led his Government to defy the action of Parliament. I might go back to the story of the railways—I might cite many other instances; but I say that any one of these acts would be sufficient in any other country to unseat the Government. To speak of another—it is a small amount as compared to the amounts to which we are committed by these railway transactions; but I ask whether any Government would be allowed to sit on the Treasury benches in England for a single day, if they, without any regard to the public service, acted as this Government did with regard to Mr. Larnach's trip Home. It is announced in this House that he is going Home at his own expense; it is announced that his visit to England has nothing to do with the Public Treasury; it is announced that the colony will be put to no expense on his account; and then we hear that, without any authority or vote of this House, the Government have made him a present of £2,000. I say that was a most unconstitutional act, and deserving of the utmost reprobation. Sir, we are all agreed at the present time that there must be an amendment in the electoral laws. But what is the history of the electoral laws of New Zealand? Is it true that all these reforms proposed by the Government are now proposed for the first time? Why, Sir, there has been a continued advance in the electoral laws ever since the time when the Constitution Act was promulgated. We have had constant and frequent changes, and the measure now brought in by the Government is not much more than a consolidation of the laws passed from time to time in days gone by. It has been said by some honorable members that this new law will not add many names to the roll. I am satis-

fied myself that, though it will improve and simplify the rolls, it will not add to them. It will not add to the rolls, but it will put the right men upon them, and therefore do good. The rolls at present are very badly made out; but it must be remembered that all ratepayers and all lodgers can be put on the rolls. This residential franchise is an improvement and a simplification of the law, and, if it is properly introduced, it will be a great boon to the country; but there is nothing very new or particularly liberal about it. It is an improvement in machinery more than anything else. The franchise at present is so low that almost anybody can get a vote if he chooses to take the trouble. This proposed law will give men less trouble; and I hope the registration system under it will be a great deal better than is the case at present. What we want, above all things, is to enable every man who is a resident in the country, and has a real stake in the country—I do not mean a pecuniary stake, but a residential interest in the country—to have a vote. We want to avoid that great mistake made by the Americans, and to exclude aliens from the franchise; and I believe that the law as proposed will do that. Therefore I think there is a general consent in the House that that law should be passed; but I say that there is nothing particularly new or liberal about it. As to the Triennial Parliaments Bill, that is merely a question of detail on which there are differences of opinion on both sides of the House, and honorable gentlemen who call it a principle have not considered it very seriously. I myself am opposed to the Triennial Parliaments Bill. I have told my constituents so several times, and I may say that they have always agreed with me. I am opposed to it on liberal grounds. I maintain that the Triennial Parliaments Bill, if passed, will make a more serious alteration in our Constitution than honorable members realize. It will practically do away with the possibility of any sudden and unexpected appeal to the people on great subjects which are before the country, because when Parliaments are triennial the practical effect will be that they will be allowed to run out. There is another very serious alteration which will be made in the Constitution, and it is a matter which has been discussed in England. I read the other day a very able paper, written from a Liberal point of view, advocating quinquennial Parliaments in England as the best system. The writer was opposed to septennial Parliaments, but he said there was a general consensus amongst leading Liberals that triennial Parliaments would be too short, and that the quinquennial system was a very fair compromise. This was the reason he gave—and I think it is a very good one too: It has been the unwritten law and the custom in England that no Parliament should be allowed to expire by effluxion of time, because it has always been thought unadvisable that a Parliament should be allowed to expire at a time which might be inconvenient to the country. For instance, a Parliament might expire in the middle of a great war, or at a time when there was serious monetary pressure in the country, when a general election would not be advisable. Therefore it has been

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always considered that it is the responsibility and the duty of the Government for the time being to choose some convenient time for a dissolution of Parliament, about a year before its dissolution would be due by effluxion of time. Therefore a quinquennial Parliament, according to the unwritten law of England, would be dissolved in about four years. But, as it was pointed out, if you have a triennial Parliament you must let it run out, because it is absurd to suppose that the country would submit to all the turmoil of a general election every two years. As I said before, this is a matter of detail. It is absurd to call it a particularly liberal provision. It is a question upon which men may fairly differ on both sides of the House. For my own part I believe it would be an alteration in the Constitution which would not be for the better, and therefore I should be disposed to vote against it. But I know there is a very general feeling in the House in favour of the Triennial Parliaments Bill, and that it is not a question which divides one side of the House from the other, but rather one which divides both sides. The honorable gentleman also threw a stone at my honorable friend the leader of the Opposition on the question of education. Now it is quite true that the honorable gentleman and myself differ in opinion on that question. But, Sir, is there no difference of opinion on the other side of the House on the question? I should like to know whether all the honorable gentlemen on the Government benches agree with the Minister of Mines, who certainly has gone a great deal further than the honorable member for Selwyn in the denominational views which he advocates with regard to education. Many years ago, in the Province of Canterbury, long before the question of a national system of education was mooted, I, for one, gave up the denominational system because I found that it did not educate the people. Like many others, I was brought face to face with the fact that there were a large number of children in the colony growing up little street Arabs, absolutely uneducated, and without the means of getting any knowledge, human or divine; and I was satisfied, with many better than myself, that we must give up any feelings or ideas we had on particular denominational questions, and determine that the children of the land should be educated. And I rejoice more in having been able to take part in giving education nationally to every child in the country than about any other public matter in which I had a hand; and I shall certainly never be a party to any action which will endanger the national education of the people. There are differences of opinion on both sides of the House, and I respect, while I do not agree with, the scruples which some honorable gentlemen have on this question; but I may say that the question of national education is settled. There is nothing that will ever break it down. Year by year, as it goes on, the people are becoming determined that, whatever details may be altered, there shall be no attempt at a recurrence to a denominational system. At the present time what the country wants above all things, and the most liberal thing that could be done for the

country, is to have carted away as quickly as possible these sham Bills that have been dangling before the country, not to be passed, but to be used at elections. Get them done with; get them passed; stop this dangling of them in the House, and dangling of them again on the hustings, and let us get to the business of the country—to the social legislation which is absolutely necessary for the country. Let us get to a simplification of the finance of the country; let us get to the prosecution of public works; and do not let us see the people in a country like this positively asking for bread and getting a stone; do not let us see numbers of the unemployed coming together in different parts of the country and asking for work, only to be told that the Legislature is too busy squabbling about what are called liberal measures to attend to them. I say that these measures can be settled very quickly if both sides of the House are determined to pass them. They were willing to pass them last year, and it was the Government who prevented their passing. Let us cart them out of the way, and then let us get to the work of the country. Then, Sir, there is this question of taxation. That has got to be settled; and I fail to see that there is any particular Liberalism about the proposal of the other side of the House as opposed to the proposal of this side of the House. Everybody is agreed that a great improvement can be made in the system of taxation, but I fail to see that it is a liberal proceeding to pick out a particular interest in the country, and to tax it, while the rest of the property in the country remains untaxed. It is not a liberal measure to pick out the backbone of the country—people who go upon the land—who have come out from England, as every one does, with the hope of getting on the land—and tax these people's property, and leave all the property accumulated by capitalists untaxed, because it does not happen to be land. And then I do not think that the present Land-Tax Act is a particularly liberal measure,—an Act which has overwhelmed the country with a system of valuations which are unintelligible to anybody interested in them—valuations which are unequal and unfair—valuations the principle of which I do not believe the Government themselves understand, and which are based upon fallacious attempts at a grand new system of political economy. There was plenty of talk about the principle on which the valuations were intended to be made under the Land-Tax Act when it was brought forward. I ask whether every prophecy then made on this side of the House has not been fulfilled, and more than fulfilled—whether, as was prophesied, the whole system has not been a complete failure—whether everybody is not disgusted, from one end of the country to the other, at the manner in which the land-tax is attempted to be levied. And I venture to say that the Government will be startled at the lawsuits which will arise before they finger one penny of the tax. I am quite certain the country will not be satisfied until there is a system of taxation which is equal for all. I was rather amazed at hearing the Premier, the other night,

throw overboard his own statement, made in this House about two years ago, when he delivered a speech in which he maintained that every man ought to pay in proportion to his holding and his property. He described the glow of virtuous pleasure with which the poor man would throw his mite into the Treasury, and say, "As I have paid, now I can call upon the rich man to pay in proportion to his wealth," and he told us how the man who had little means would scorn to have a different tax put upon the rich man's land from the tax which was put upon his own. Now, Sir, that is all thrown overboard, and there is a new expression brought forward,—I have seen it, just as one has seen the expression "unearned increment," in many books and papers of late—that taxation should be according to the sacrifice made. When the honorable gentleman has thoroughly explained what that means—and a little more satisfactorily than "unearned increment" was explained from the Government benches last year—the House may be inclined to debate that question. But I will undertake to say that the feeling among all Englishmen is that taxation, to be fair, must be equal, and in proportion to the property of every one, and that no other taxation will be satisfactory to the country or to any man in it, whether he be rich or poor. We all hope that we shall very soon come to a division on this question, and I certainly do not wish to stand in the way. There are many other matters referred to by the honorable member for Mount Ida which might be discussed at some length, but I shall not detain the House now by alluding to them. I hope that Liberalism, in its true sense, will be the watchword of this House and of this country; but I hope that it will not be a clap-trap pretence, and that, above all, it will be a Liberalism which shall seek to level up, and not, as the Premier has attempted to do, to level down.

Mr. TAINUI.—I stand up to address this House. I am well acquainted with Mr. John Hall. I knew him when he lived at Otatau. What I am looking at is his descent from the other House to this. To my mind it seems that he looked down and wished to bring about a resurrection; but he comes to this House, I believe, to be buried. Probably, after he has been in this House some time, and sees some of his friends go to the wall in the other House, he will want to rush back there. I know him. He has been a long time in this House attempting to make laws for Europeans and Maoris, but I do not consider that during the time he has been in the several Governments he has framed any law for the benefit of the Maori. I think Sir William Fox is the proper person to lead the Opposition, although we only have his spirit here during the present session. I would like to ask the present Opposition if they are able to clear away all the grievances that have befallen the Natives. I am certain that if they gain the seats of the Ministry they will never be able to do so. I can see that the laws concerning the Maori people have been very injurious. I have not seen any measure yet that has been for their good, and I would ask that any future measures affecting the Maoris

should be so framed as to place them on an equal footing with the Europeans. Do not insert in these special Bills that are brought in anything damaging to the Maoris, but let them work under the same laws. The Opposition can see that Sir George Grey is at the head of the Government; and let him adopt his own course, because I am of opinion that he will be able to remedy some of the wrongs. He may not be able to remedy them entirely, but he will do so to a certain degree, notwithstanding that the honorable member for Kaiapoi said that when Sir George Grey was Governor he made those laws for the Maoris. It seems to me that the present contest is simply one between one side and the other, and it is very hard to say which side will win. The Natives of the Middle Island think that there has been nothing done for their good so far by the present Government; but what they look to is this: that good laws connected with the lands of the Maori people are steadily progressing, and the land is their great and only treasure. That is the only thing that is left to them, and they look to it as being very important that good measures relating to their land should be brought down by the Government, so that both races might live together peaceably, and on friendly terms. When such measures are brought down, I shall express myself further upon them.

Mr. TAWHAI.—I now stand up to give expression to the thoughts which brought me here. I will speak of the ideas which have emanated from several members who have spoken during the last few nights. In the first place, I heard the amendment proposed by Mr. Hall to the effect that the House had no confidence in the present Ministry. It appears to be the usual thing, and a thing that is looked forward to by many members in this House, that one side should fight against the other. I do not see any good in that whatever. A great deal of harm is done in this kind of warfare, and this harm extends to people outside of this House. Instead of members devoting their time to the passing of measures which will benefit the country, they waste the time of the House in useless contention. It may be profitable to those who indulge in this sort of thing, but I can assure the House that it is not so to the people outside. With regard to the northern part of this Island, the people there have not yet been benefited by the Parliamentary laws. The people are still greatly injured. Now, is it a proper thing to heap harm on the people of the colony through this fighting against each other? I heard an expression from Mr. Saunders implying something against the Maori dual vote. I would ask what harm there is in giving the Maoris the dual vote or in placing their names on the electoral roll. The Maoris of New Zealand are not adventurers. They do not come from other lands. The country belonged to themselves. They inherited it from their ancestors. It was theirs, and now these lands are being brought under the operation of the Act, and the *mana* of the Queen is over them. I heard from Mr. De Lautour something to the effect that it was Sir William Fox who first advocated the idea that

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the Natives should be placed on the electoral roll. Perhaps my old friend Sir William Fox thought it would be encouraging me too much to have my name on the roll, and he afterwards repented of his first act. The Opposition are apparently of the same opinion—that I, the Maori, should not have my name on the roll. I have heard the honorable member Mr. Saunders say that certain words were used by Napoleon Bonaparte—that Bonaparte said his young recruits were food for cannon; and that the young Greyites were food for gammon. I should think it would have been better applied to the honorable gentleman himself, had any one gone over and followed him. Looking at the matter as it is, he is not in favour of the Maoris being placed on the electoral roll. That is one instance. The Opposition say that Sir George Grey is a very bad man. If so, I now say that all the Europeans are bad. The whole race are bad. The honorable member Mr. Hall, and the honorable member Mr. Bowen, were in the Government that created warfare in this Island, and it is not fair for them to blame the present Government when they themselves were responsible on former occasions. I am grateful that while I have been listening here I have not heard one bad word from any honorable member said against the Maoris. All the evils that have arisen in New Zealand have sprung up through the laws of the Europeans. Honorable members have referred to the serious troubles that have taken place in different parts of this Island, and they have named the present Government as being the origin of those troubles. But I say No. What I say is, that the real cause of these troubles is the law which provides for the Native Land Court, through which surveyors go on the land to survey, and in doing so get shot at. How is it that it never struck your people who have been in previous Governments that this Native Land Court should be eradicated? Several Europeans in the Waikato District have been shot, and have lost their lives; and also in the Ngapuhi country people have met with the same fate through the surveying system. Do not blame the Government of Sir George Grey for this thing, but blame the previous Governments. When the Electoral Bill was being discussed in this House Sir George Grey befriended the Maoris and supported the idea of the dual vote—a thing which had been encouraged by Sir William Fox in days gone by. I would not call those people my friends who are attempting to debar me from having my name on the electoral roll. It was on those grounds, principally, that my people sent me here to represent them, and to see if I could not get their names placed on that roll. They elected me so that I should stand here as the friend of Sir George Grey, as the friend of Mr. Sheehan, and of their Government. If any one should blame me for so doing, I would remind him that at least I will act as a chief should act, and will carry out what I came here to do.

Mr. TOMOANA.—Sir, I congratulate all the members of this House, in speaking to them for the first time. I offer them my best wishes and respects. This time has been allotted to us, the

Maori members, to express our feelings and ideas. The reason why I stand up at the present time is because I want to inform the House what my feelings are, and also to let them learn how I am going to vote. The first thing I am going to say to you is, that I came here about the Native grievances. I did not come here to support those who were against the Maoris, but I came here to support those who were doing well for them and were working for their good. I have only a few words to say to you, especially about the words that fell from the lips of my colleague with regard to Sir George Grey not having done any harm in this Island. I feel glad at his having said so. I have seen in the Scriptures that the first sin was committed by Adam and Eve. Following up that, I will say that Sir George Grey was the first man in this Island who made laws both for Europeans and Maoris, not only about Napier, but also at the very place my honorable colleague comes from. Ngapuhi were the greatest tribe, the largest and most important tribe, in this Island of New Zealand; and who caused their downfall? Who fought against Hone Heke? Who was Waikato's antagonist? Who took Waikato and placed it in the hands of the Europeans? Now I come to the time when a new Government was searched for to conduct the affairs of the Island. At that time appeared Sir George Grey. Although the Maoris are loyal subjects, they have been for a long time crying out against the evils oppressing them through the Europeans. When the Grey Government came into power, support to them from the Maoris was general; they praised the Government of Sir George Grey. Now, up to the present time, not one promise has been made affecting the people of this Island, in all the places throughout it, that has been fulfilled. I have not many words to say, and I will not use any strong terms. I do not altogether trust in the administration of the Native Minister. I do not think he has administered Native affairs properly. I am not against the Native Minister personally, nor against the Premier. What I blame is the mismanagement they have caused with regard to Native matters. The first thing I will speak about is this: The Native Minister said to us, "If I [the Native Minister] were in the Government, I should stop all land sales. Secondly, he said, "If I get into the Government I will stop all Native Land Courts, and allow the Natives themselves to investigate questions relating to the Native lands—their own lands." On the East Coast, about Napier, and further up the East Coast, all the Maoris agreed to have a Native Parliament." They raised the question largely among the tribes, and in furtherance of their object they sent here several petitions, which I have since seen lying about uncared for. I have been very much pained at seeing these petitions lying about here in such a manner. In the present debate I feel personally sorry for the Ministry—my love is with them personally; but I cannot support them in the present question, because I have seen the laws affecting the Natives. Those laws passed referring to the Maoris have

been drawn up by lawyers, and no Maori can understand them. Formerly in the Native Land Courts there were no lawyers allowed to appear; now lawyers are allowed. People who are not well off and have not plenty of money cannot cope with any lawyer in the Native Land Court—they are at a disadvantage. The consequence is that any one who has very little money, although he has a rightful claim to the land, loses it, and the land goes to the person who is able to pay the lawyers. Now, I look at the present position of affairs in this way. The leader of the Opposition is a new man to me in this House. I have never heard anything about him. I have never heard anything said against his name ever since he has been in this House, and the several Governments he has taken part in, or that he has done anything for the Maori people. There are several on the Opposition side who are large landholders, and are opposed to me; but, as I have already said, the leader of the Opposition is a new man to me. That is why I give him my support. I did not first tell him what I thought and ask him to agree to it: I went to him. The first word came from him. Although I had wished to meet him before that, I did not say anything. The very first word he said to me agreed exactly with my thoughts. I explained to him the ideas I had in my mind concerning the Maori people. Those ideas of mine were connected with the people of the whole of this Island, and not of my particular district alone. They extended to those Natives who are loyal subjects and those who are not loyal. I said to Mr. Hall, "If your side gets into power, will you have a Native Minister?" He said "Yes." "Will you give to the Native Minister—to the Maori Minister—the sole power of managing Native affairs?" He said "Yes." I explained to him that I was not speaking about those lands which have been operated on by the law—Crown-granted lands—but purely Native lands. I said the lands that were already Crown-granted the European and Maori should manage together. When he agreed to all my ideas concerning the Native race, I agreed to support his side. I shall exercise my vote as a chief. If I see anything wrong on the other side I shall attempt to overthrow them. Whatever side I see is right, I shall go on that side. As the leader of the Opposition agreed to what I explained to him as my views, I will go to his side. If the Government remain in office, well and good. All I wish is that good laws may be framed for the Maori people—better than have been hitherto. If they will make good laws I shall have an opportunity of supporting them; but now I will vote with the Opposition. That is the conclusion of what I have to say.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Sir, I do not think that I have ever risen to address the House under more humiliating circumstances than the present; for, though I always feel proud of being a member of this House, and being able to take part in the business of the country, I cannot but feel, on this occasion, that which is sometimes termed *ennui*. There has been nothing said during the last few days, especially by the old members of the House,

that has not been said a dozen times previously during the last few years; and I am afraid that what I am obliged to say this afternoon will prove to have been said by me a great many times during the last few years. Indeed, I should not have spoken at all in this debate had it not been for the circumstance that there are many new members in the House who otherwise would not have had a chance of making themselves acquainted with the real facts of the case, and who otherwise might imagine that the long string of accusations levelled against the Government are based upon facts. I must, however, before proceeding to other matters, state this to honorable gentlemen on the opposite side: that my absence from the House during the time they were speaking has not been intended as any act of discourtesy; but they will understand this: that my functions are of a multifarious character, and, owing to the press of other matters, I have not been able to remain in the House to listen to them. But, at the same time, I may say I have read the speeches of all members, so far as those speeches have been given publicity to, and I dare say I have a very fair idea of what has been said. I have been fortunate enough to hear the speeches of the three Maori members who have just sat down, and I must say I have reason to be pleased with the speeches delivered by those honorable gentlemen. A word or two in regard to them: I should like to say a few words. The first gentleman spoke very plainly indeed. He said, "Bad is the best of you;" and with that statement I am afraid I must concur. I think that all of us are to blame for the very little we have done for the Maori people. The second honorable gentleman took what, to my mind, appeared to be a straightforward party stand; he said, "I have been returned to support the present Government. I shall vote as a chief ought to do—keep my promise, and vote for the Government." Now let us see what the third honorable member says. I have been reading for a few days past a very interesting work, entitled "Records of the Past," and we have now had before us the records of the past concerning the last ten or fourteen days. It has been rather a puzzle to me why honorable gentlemen have come to me and said, "The Maoris are gone;" "We have three out of the four Maoris;" "We have two out of the four Maoris;" "You will only get one of the Maoris;" and so on. Now we have some light thrown on the subject. It appears the leader of the Opposition has been interviewing the Maori members—that the leader of the Opposition and the Maori members have had consoling conversations between themselves; and the result is apparent. The honorable member for the East Coast says Mr. Hall is quite a young man. Well, to me and all those who know Mr. Hall, he is a very old man indeed. Mr. Hall cut his wisdom-teeth many years ago, and, if any one knows what he is about, Mr. Hall does, at any rate. If the honorable gentleman will read the records of the past history of the colony he will find that Mr. Hall is not so very young a man; and he will find out, moreover, all that that gentleman has done for the Maori people.

Mr. Sheehan

For instance, he will find that Mr. Hall was the gentleman who was instrumental, in the year 1869, in shutting out the whole of the claims of the Maoris in the South Island, and that he did this by an Order in Council which was declared to be illegal at the time, and required validation by an Act of this House. After the honorable gentleman has known Mr. Hall for another twelve months, and has taken into consideration what he has done in connection with the Maori people, he will then have a very different estimate of Mr. Hall's character—an estimate which, I have no doubt, will have an appreciable effect on his vote in a future session. I am not speaking offensively of the honorable member for Selwyn, but rather in a Pickwickian sense: still I am quite sure that the assurances which have been given by that honorable member to the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District and other Native members are assurances which he does not intend to carry out, and could not carry out if ever so willing to do so. Let me tell the Maori members that there occur in the history of every party, both Government and Opposition, important times—critical times—when a man would pawn his shirt for a vote. That is the case with us at the present time. If the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District were to go to the honorable member for Selwyn and ask him to make a railway to the moon, that honorable gentleman would doubtless reply, "Well, personally I approve of the idea; but I will lay it before the party." If my honorable friend asked the honorable gentleman for an unlimited order upon the Public Treasury, he would reply, "The idea is really a very good one: I will submit it for consideration." But such promises are worth nothing, and would not be given except at these critical times. But such promises have not been all. There has also been a good deal of misrepresentation going on. The honorable gentleman (Mr. Tomoana) asked what member first made war on the Maoris in this colony, and he went on to say, in so many words, probably on the authority of the leader of the Opposition, that the first war was made by Sir George Grey. If the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District had read anything of the history of the colony he would have known that the first war was in full swing when Sir George Grey came here; and, moreover, that he was the first person to establish peace and grant an amnesty to the Maoris who had taken part in the war; and, what is more, he did not take one single acre of land from the Maoris. Now we come to the Waikato war. We are told by the same honorable gentleman that Sir George Grey was the author of the Waikato war, and that he was the author of the confiscation policy. What are the facts of the case? Of course every man must have an instructor—a schoolmaster—and the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District must have received instruction of some one; but I trust my friend the honorable member for Selwyn has not been instructing the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District, because I am sure he must recognize, from his own sense of fair-play, that it is not right to put false

history into the mind of a man. True, we know, as a matter of fact, that the Waikato war was begotten of the Taranaki war, and that Governor Gore Browne was the man who made the Taranaki war, and not Sir George Grey. We know, also, that Sir George Grey was opposed to the policy of confiscation, and that it was this opposition that got him into trouble; in fact, that his refusal to agree to the policy of confiscation led to his recall from this country. If the honorable member will look into history and see what really are the facts he will find he is quite right in saying he does not know Mr. John Hall. We have been told that he has asked the honorable member for Selwyn if he would establish a Maori Minister, having all the rights and powers of a European Minister as to Native lands—having the power of deciding, with regard to Native lands not Crown-granted, that the Native Land Court should be abolished; and Mr. Hall said, "Yes, certainly; of course." Can there be purer bunkum? What can be more absurd? Could any man in search of a vote go further? I may tell the honorable gentleman that I was quite aware of these negotiations. I knew of every one of them, as they were going on day by day: nay, more, these very same questions were put to me, and I replied "No." What does it mean? It means a Maori Minister, with a separate department—a separate staff of clerks. And yet, when the leader of the Opposition is asked if he would agree to this, he replies, "Yes, certainly; if you will vote for us." My answer was "No. The time has not come for that. When your people can speak English, when you take part in the Cabinet Council and talk without an interpreter, and cease to have those great differences in your tribes, then will be time enough for a Maori Minister to be put in the same position as a European Minister." That was my answer. Now, will the honorable gentleman dare to fulfil his promise? He dare not. I defy him. We are told, also, that the honorable gentleman was asked, at the same time, "Will you agree to stop all sales and leases of lands?" Forth came again the same answer, the condition being the same, and the necessity of giving the promise greater than before, perhaps—"Yes, I will stop all sales and leases." Upon my word, I have done some little lobbying in my time, and I confess that I have occasionally stretched a point, but there are limits beyond which I have not gone. Well, if the honorable gentleman will tell his party in this House that he is prepared to make a Maori Minister, and that he is prepared to stop all sales and leases of land—

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Well, I take the statement of the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District. I say that, if he were to tell his party, there are not five members of his party who would allow him to fulfil his promise. Why, as to promises, it seems to me clear that the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District could get a promise of anything he was inclined to ask for; and when he goes outside to-night, after the division, he will say, "I am surprised at my own moderation." Now, there is a habit

we have, and we have taught it to the Maoris, of reducing transactions of this kind to writing, so that there may be perpetual testimony of what has taken place; but on this occasion, it is said, there was a desire on both sides to be bound by words of honor. The honorable member for the Eastern Maori District had made his demand, and the honorable member for Selwyn had made his promise, therefore it was unnecessary to reduce the thing to writing. That was a very good plan, because I will be bound that, if the honorable member for Selwyn had attempted to put his hand to paper making such a promise as that, his party henceforth would have consisted of himself. He dare not attempt to fulfil such a promise. Let us see now whether we are acting fairly in this matter. We are a superior race. We have introduced Christianity and parliamentary government into the country, and ought to set a good example in every respect; yet that side of the House on which there is a flame of purity burning which is not to be found here, for party purposes, to secure a vote to oust a Government, to gain these benches—to do this, I say, those honorable gentlemen are prepared to eat more dirt than I could swallow in a lifetime. There is just one point to which I might refer before I pass on. My friend may say, "Well, yes, we admit that it was an indiscreet thing to do; but party pressure was strong, and, having been asked to do this, we could not refuse." Now, we have testimony that my honorable friend was the first to make these proposals—that he went to the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District, and said, "If you will vote for me, I will do so-and-so." The Native member says, "I did not wish to ask first, but Mr. Hall saved me the trouble by proposing it." I understand my honorable friend does not know of the action of the honorable member for Selwyn with regard to the Natives in the South Island; so I will repeat that by his action the Native people in that Island were altogether shut out from their land.

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—They were given a paltry piece of land, in some instances not more than about two acres in extent per head, and an order was signed by the leader of the Opposition, which order had been covered by a vote of this House, and the result was that, up to the present time, but for the action of this Government, there would not have been a single acre of land for those Natives. It appears to me that there must be some break in the narrative of the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District, or he would not have left out the main question—that question which most nearly affects the race he represents—the Maori dual vote. I should have thought that he, being a Maori, and therefore ready to do everything that he could on behalf of his people, would be anxious to inquire from the honorable gentleman who is to be our new Premier what he was going to do for the Maori people in that respect. However, his history of his relations with that honorable gentleman is silent upon that question. Let me tell him what the honorable member for Selwyn has done in regard to that matter. The honorable member

for the Eastern Maori District thinks that my honorable friend opposite was in the Government, or became a member of the Government, which brought in the Maori dual vote. It is not so: he was a member of the Ministry which kept it back for years. Does the honorable member know that the honorable member for Selwyn was a party to the movement last session—in a place to which I cannot further refer—for striking out the Maori dual vote altogether? It is a positive fact that, after the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District and his people had taken the trouble to put their names from time to time on the roll so as to insure their votes, this person whom he calls the "new person" was one of the most active in taking away their franchise. If that is incorrect, let it be contradicted at once, before I go to another point. I hear no contradiction, so I will proceed. I have no intention of referring to the speeches delivered by previous speakers. I feel that the rest of the House, as I myself, desire to bring this debate to a close as speedily as possible. We have counted noses, and we all pretty well know what the result will be; so that the sooner we come to a division the better, in order that we may know what future operations may be necessary. I shall therefore be brief. I shall follow the course which I took last session, and take as my text the speech of the leader of the Opposition, and simply refer incidentally to those points in other members' speeches which may relate more especially to remarks made by my honorable friend opposite. First of all, as a matter of fair-play, I may express my own opinion—and, I am sure, the opinion of every member on this side of the House—that we rejoice in the change that has been made in the leader of the Opposition. Whatever little weaknesses he may give way to outside the House and in the lobbies, there can be no doubt that inside the House his demeanour has been characterized by a gentlemanly, calm, and conciliatory spirit which has saved this debate very much from falling into the depths into which the debate on a similar motion fell last session. Of course it must be a matter of wonder to all of us that the Opposition, who claimed to possess then within their ranks all the talents, have not been able to find amongst themselves any one person able to take their lead, and have been obliged to import a leader from abroad. History repeats itself. I have heard that Cypheus went to the infernal regions for a certain purpose, and there is another instance of something of the same kind being done, to which I shall not refer. But I must say I cannot understand that the party who last session were ready to govern the country should now have been obliged to import an honorable gentleman from another place for party purposes. At all events, the honorable gentleman, like the bad shilling, is back here again, and we must take him for better or worse; and I am thankful that, being in the House, he has taken up a rôle that no man could better take up than himself. I cannot say that I am sorry that the gentleman whose position he has taken has not returned, although towards myself, I confess, he was generally most courteous, and when he made attacks upon me I was always able to reply to

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him by facts. On the whole, I am glad the electors of Wanganui have given him time for reflection. I observe that, following the old custom of our Maori brethren, having killed him politically, they have put him up a tree. If I were to ask honorable gentlemen where we are now, I presume there are very few who could answer; but, as far as I can make out, this is our position: In 1877, the present Government turned out the then Government; in 1878, the present Government had a majority of thirteen or fourteen—but I may explain how it came to pass that many of those gentlemen did not respond to the rein. The fact was, that they had been only recently taken from the run, were not well broken in, and, in the hands of the old and experienced jockeys of the Opposition, were sometimes led into the wrong stable. So that in 1878 they prevented the Government carrying on the business of the country.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—We voted for you half the time.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—If so, all I can say is, I should not care to have such votes on this no-confidence motion. In 1879 this new Parliament was returned. Those who were in the Parliament on the occasion of its last meeting will remember the extraordinary change which came over the faces of my honorable friends opposite when they heard that the Governor was going to grant a dissolution. That was not their programme. They were so anxious to carry out the liberal measures which belonged to us that they wanted to go on with them at once, and wanted no dissolution. But a dissolution was granted; and we find that, while the Government went to the country with a minority of fourteen, they ought now to have a majority, if every vote was given fairly and straightforwardly and above-board. Let us look at what has happened. Out of seventeen members of the Opposition who went to election, only three have come back to tell the tale. Of the other party, only five lost their seats; whereas the late leader of the Opposition, and another leading man of that party whom I am really sorry not to see here again, have been left out in the cold. Mr. Whitaker was beaten in his own stronghold—beaten at a place which he himself picked out for a battle-ground—beaten by one who, although he could not be termed a beardless boy, is not far from it. I say honestly for myself, and I am sure many around me will agree with me, that I miss that gentleman from the House. I could point to several honorable gentlemen on that side whom I would much sooner see out of it. But there is the fact, that one of the leaders of the country, one of its highest public servants—a man who ruled as Superintendent of Auckland for years; a man who has led the Government of the whole country for years—could not get a seat. There is no doubt whatever that neither the Opposition of last session nor the Opposition of this session can command the confidence of the country. I would also point out what, to my mind, is a most serious charge against the Opposition. It was a most unfair thing last session, and it is a still more unfair thing on their part this session, to

take such a course as to move a vote of want of confidence as an amendment to the Address in reply to the Governor's Speech. If a reasonable time were given for the production of the measures promised in the Speech, and of the papers and documents relating to the subjects referred to, then it would be quite fair to bring forward such a motion. But what has happened? Persons like myself, and other old members of the House, know where to go and pick up the information that we want, and, when statements are made, know where to lay our hands on documents to verify them or refute them; but new members must take for gospel everything that is said—they cannot fortify themselves by reference to public documents. The course is certainly not unconstitutional, but it is unparliamentary and unfair, and I am perfectly sure the consequences will recoil on the heads of those who have taken it. Last session the issue put before the House was this: that, while the Opposition approved of the policy of the Government, they disapproved of the administration of affairs. In fact, they said there had been maladministration. That, I think, is correct. I may, first of all, refer to what may be called the major proposition, from our point of view, but the minor proposition from their point of view—that is, the approval of our measures. I can hardly imagine a greater piece of claptrap than for those honorable gentlemen to assume, for party purposes, that they are liberal, and ready to carry out liberal measures. I speak of the leaders of that party, and I say that there is not one of them who is a Liberal at heart, or who would, if he could help it, pass a single one of these measures. The fact is that, in order to get on these benches, they have abandoned their own principles, they have come on to the Liberal platform, and are making the sacrifice, not for the good of the country, but for their own benefit. This year the tactics are changed: now, they call for a reconstruction of the Ministry. Last year, the whole lot were bad; this year, there is a brand that can be saved from the burning. And why? For the very same reason that led to the meeting between the leader of the Opposition and my honorable friend the member for the Eastern Maori District. The Government, upon a plain want-of-confidence motion, could not be turned out of office. Let the honorable gentlemen opposite table a resolution to that effect, and try it, if they like and dare do it. They dare not. But the process which had been going on for some days, and which wound up with the production of this motion, discovered the fact that there are on this side of the House and on that side of the House a number of honorable members who are in favour of what is called "reconstruction," although they may differ as to what form that reconstruction should take. There are no doubt persons voting for the Government who are in favour of a reconstruction, and there are those on the other side who would not vote with that party unless they were assured that some of our party were to be in the next Government. I will now just refer to the honorable member for Bruce, who was good enough to make a speech to the House yesterday in which, I

understand, he said he had informed his constituents that this would probably be his last session in this House.

Mr. MURRAY.—That is a matter between me and my constituents.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The honorable gentleman and his constituents are, like myself, before this House at the present time, and I am entitled to remark upon the matter. I understand that, as soon as the honorable gentleman has passed his Drainage Bill, he intends to retire from this sphere. Although he is not of my party now, I should regret it, because I cannot forget old party ties, and must pay a tribute of respect to his action in the past. At one time that honorable gentleman had a special function of his own. No matter what Government was in power, he always would insist upon delivering his own Financial Statement. From that, I gather that, with an ambition which was perfectly laudable in itself, he at one time hoped to become the controller of the public finance. I trust he will not take that to be an accusation. To my mind, it is a perfectly honorable desire on the part of a public man, and a member of this House, to endeavour, if possible, so to bring himself forward as to become entitled to the confidence of his party, and to deserve office at their hands. Now he seems to have broken out in a fresh place. This time he has delivered both a Financial Statement and a Statement on Native Affairs; and I presume he has determined that it is better to have two strings to his bow, so that, if he cannot have one, he may have the other; and I gathered, from the tenor of his speech, and his attack on myself, that on the whole he thinks his chances against me are the best. All I can say is that, if his party come into office, and he obtains the position he seems to covet, he shall not have a very rancorous opposition, although I would advise his party, before making the selection, to weigh the matter very carefully indeed. Now, Sir, I will refer to an honorable gentleman whom I am sorry to see in such bad company—the honorable member for Grey and Bell. I listened to his speech, or the greater portion of it, and I feel bound to say that it was a fair and dispassionate examination of what appeared to be the grounds of accusation against the Government; and, although I differed from his conclusions, I cannot but admit that he was far more effective than the other honorable gentlemen who spoke on the subject, because he confined himself to public reasons. I attach great importance to an expression of opinion coming from him. I am not now asking him to interview me outside in any of the numerous passages leading to this chamber; but I am talking to him publicly in the House. I know he is going to vote against us, and I believe if he did not do so he would forfeit his own self-respect, and therefore I tell him that I attach the greatest importance to his expressions of opinion. The honorable gentleman has evidently given the most careful consideration to this question; but I will show him, in the course of my reply to the leader of the Opposition, that he has been arguing on false premises—that he has been badly in-

formed—and that, on the whole, the action taken by the Government was the best that could have been taken to avoid a war and to preserve the public peace. The honorable member for Bruce is not, so far as I know, in the confidence of Rewi; but he appeared to know a good deal about Rewi, and about his actions and intentions. All I can say is, that I may be compelled to refer to him again as I travel on; and I will show that the intentions of Rewi are straightforward and honorable—that his action has been in the public interest, and for the preservation of public peace; and at the present time it is his action, and his action alone, amongst the King party, which has saved us from what might have been a Maori war. There is one thing to which I must refer very briefly, before taking up some more important matters; and that is this: that there are a number of gentlemen in the House who tell you and, I believe, tell you fairly, and have no intention to dissemble, that they would like to be supporting the present Government; but who draw you on one side and say, "The fact is this: We can't stand Grey." That is the expression they use. When you reply to that by a question and say, "Be kind enough to inform me why it is you can't stand Grey," every man gives a different reason, and, so far as I have heard, not a single reason is given that ought to influence a man in the discharge of his public duty in this House. I ask them to point out to me what the honorable gentleman has done to entitle him to be stigmatized in that way—I ask them to point out to me a single speck of dirt in his character, from the time he first came here in 1845 up to the present time. That he has many bitter opponents, I admit; but I protest against this attempt to ostracize a public man on grounds so frivolous as are advanced by his enemies. It is the old story in Grecian history of Aristides the Just repeated, when it was said, "I will ostracize him, because I am tired of hearing him called Aristides the Just." That is about the long and short of it. There is no occasion to refer to the policy of the Government as shown in the Governor's Speech, because the Opposition appear to have, on that particular point, a most capacious maw. They are prepared to swallow everything, including these benches. They want them as a dessert to wind up with. Let them get these and they will take any policy you like—big or little, Conservative or Liberal, broad- or narrow-gauge, as long as they can travel on the rails and stop at this station. If they do, and I happen to be on the other side, I will try to furnish them with a return ticket. I shall not now—in fact, the tenor of the debate does not call upon me to do so—refer to what formed, to my mind, the most unpleasant feature in the discussions of the House last session, namely, the insinuations made against myself. I said then, and I say now, that, so long as I do my public business, and do it properly and well, my private character should stand unchallenged at the hands of anybody in this House; and I say, further, that there is evidence of this fact: that the very man from whom the attack emanated told the country through the Press, by his advertisements and at his meetings, that I

was not the person referred to all—in fact, that I was a very right and proper party indeed, and that, so far from abusing me, good gracious, I am, thick and thin—a right and proper man. That, gentleman said, "I understand that some think that I am the person who referred to Mr. Sheehan in the House, and talked about his being poor and having bills returned and cheques dishonored. I tell you that I am not the person. I never said so. I never meant to refer to him." Sir, I put it to honorable men on all sides of the House—I can ask scores on the other side of the House—is it not the fact that I was the person referred to? What can you think of a man who, having done that, would eat his own words for the sake of coming to this House again? The people of Franklin estimated that gentleman at his proper worth, and left him out in the cold; and I trust that any man who comes into this House to make favour and secure power by abuse of that kind will meet with the same reward. The honorable member for Selwyn referred to the Maori expenditure, and said that a certain amount had been spent above the actual estimates. Now, I cannot say what the actual amount is, but I am willing to admit—in fact, there is no use denying—that there has been a large excess of expenditure, for reasons which, when the occasion arises—and it will arise when the motion of the honorable member for Clive comes on—I shall give in detail. I shall not take up the time of the House now by reading figures and wearying it with statistics, but I may say that, while there has been an excess of expenditure, it has been entirely in the public interest, and it has been for objects which, when my honorable friend the member for the Eastern Maori Electoral District and his party come into power, they will find were very necessary. They will find themselves in this position: that, if they attempt to apply the European standard and to curtail expenditure, the necessity for the scale of expenditure which we were obliged to incur will be only too unpleasantly apparent in the hindrance given to them in coming to this House with public business, and bringing other matters before the Parliament and the country. The honorable gentleman told us that the Government had strained every nerve and done everything it possibly could to be in a position to assure the country that at last peace was established. What I said on a previous occasion, and what has been said by every Government, was this: that we honestly believed that no actual disturbance of the public peace between the European and Maori races can ever take place. I believe that now, and I say this much: that, if it does take place, it will arise from the unworthy motives of people who would like to see the country plunged into a war. What happened a few years ago—in 1872 or 1873? We were told by a gentleman—to whom I wish to refer with the utmost possible respect, and of whom I only speak now as a public man—we had telegrams sent by him from the Waikato to the effect that he had established peace with the Maori King. That announcement went flying through the wires to England; and when this House met

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what had become of the honorable gentleman? From a plain Minister he had been elevated to a K.O.M.G., or something of that sort—I forget the exact number of the initials. That was the result of a purely unimportant meeting, from which nothing whatever came, and the proof of that is that, up to 1876, nothing whatever was done. I think that, when a previous Ministry gave such an assurance, and even dared to approach the presence of Royalty with the statement that it was true, in order to obtain from Royalty that distinction which is only given in cases where it is merited, all that can be said is that they are not the persons who should sling stones at us. Reference has been made to Hiroki, to Te Whiti, and to the disturbances at the Bay of Islands and at Ohinemuri. Now what is the fact? That for years before troubles of the same kind had occurred. And when we came into office in 1877 the Maori King and his people were, so far as the Government were concerned, as far distant from us as they were when the war closed in 1864. No single step had been made towards a permanent peace, or towards the opening up of the country. On the contrary, all that happened was this: that for several years previous young men went out—as an honorable gentleman once a member of this House said—for the “shooting season.” The honorable gentleman tells us that the position of the Maori King even at the present time is antagonistic. I should like to have heard the honorable member for the Western Maori District speaking on that point, because I think he would tell the House that, although the Government and the Maori King did not conclude anything at the Te Kopua meeting, yet the King himself is still well disposed and anxious to preserve the peace of the country, and will in no way aid and abet those who are inclined to do otherwise. Now, I would point out this: If that be true—and I appeal to the honorable gentleman whether it is not true—it is a most mischievous thing to say in this House that the Maori King, at the present time, holds a position of antagonism towards us. What does it mean? It gets into the newspapers, is wired all over the country, reaches the King camp, and in a few days he is told that the Parliament of the country—not the honorable member for Selwyn, but the Parliament—has said that the Maori King is antagonistic to the interests of the Europeans. I said, Sir, when I commenced my address, that a good deal of this matter is wearisome if one has to go over it again and again; but, if the Opposition will furnish up their old furniture and bring it before the House, I must produce some consignments of my own. I have to pass over very briefly matters to which reference has been made in speeches delivered during the debate, and on which I could dwell at greater length, and afford the House some little instruction; but, having a regard to a saving of time, and to a desire which has been expressed that the debate may be closed as soon as possible, I hope that even my honorable friends opposite will excuse me if I pass them over somewhat lightly, and that they will not think that I am afraid of meeting them. When we came into

office we found the Maori King exceedingly anxious to meet the Government. We received letters and telegrams inviting us to a meeting, and we went to that meeting. Nothing more took place there than what you might term a “tangi.” The Maori people then met Sir George Grey for the first time for about twenty years, and they would do nothing more than cry and eat, and arrange to postpone the meeting. At the second meeting proposals were made to them, which have been printed and laid on the table of the House—proposals which, the Premier will bear me out in saying, were accepted absolutely by the Maori King—accepted fully and completely; and, but for the fact that he felt himself called upon to consult his constitutional advisers, he would there and then have settled the whole matter. In regard to the difficulty which arose, I will ask members on both sides of the House to bear this in mind: that up to the present time only two causes are known to account for the difficulty which then took place. One was, that we opened up a road through Crown country; the second was, that certain lands which they had refused to take were given by us as an endowment for a Native school in the Waikato District. When the Natives chose to make these two things the grounds of objection, does this House mean to say for a moment that the Government were not wise, were not dignified, were not acting in the interests of the country, in saying, “Very well, if these are your grounds of objection, we will withdraw those proposals, and you can talk to us by-and-by”? Our reasons for withdrawing them are pretty well known to Major Te Wheoro, at all events. We should not have proposed them at all if it had not been for the action of the previous Government; but, having given the King Natives a fair chance to consider them, having given the King party plenty of time to think about them, we determined to withdraw them. And why? Because in these proposals was a stipulation to the effect that Tawhiao should have power to control the construction of roads, bridges, and other works to be carried on in the country over which he presides. We object to that, and I hope that no Government will concede a point of that kind to any person within the colony. We are frequently told of the necessity of compelling these people to obey the laws; but how is this possible, after what has been said by the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District, more especially when he is told by the leader of the Opposition that this preposterous demand is necessary for the quiescence of the party to which he belongs, and will form a portion of the policy of the future? I do not wish to take up the time of the House by detailing the communications referred to. I will only mention one fact, which in itself will prove the value of what has been done. When the outrage took place at the Thames the other day, what did Rewi do? He sent messengers to every one of his settlements to cut off all means of escape for the refugees into the Waikato, and did everything in his power to assist me in handing over these people to justice. I ask the House to reflect upon the value of this one act. What

would have happened a few years ago? If a Native committed an offence of this kind, the Maori people would have upheld him and, by force of arms, prevented any attempt to rescue the offender. Now, Sir, I come to what is, to my mind, a worn-out story—the story of the Waimate Plains. I can only say, in reference to this matter, that there is a great deal of misapprehension, especially in the case of the honorable member for Grey and Bell (Colonel Trimble). I do not blame the previous Government for anything connected with the survey of the Waimate Plains; but this, I believe, is the fact: that the Civil Commissioner of the district, Major Brown, had a kind of *carte blanche* authority to proceed with the survey of the land, and about the time, or shortly before the time, we came into office he was about to carry out his instructions to survey the land. Coming into office as we did, having had no chance to pick up the threads of the affair, we decided to defer the survey, at the instance of persons who appeared to be well advised on the matter. It was on that advice alone that we acted. Major Brown was advised by me to postpone the survey. I went to Titokowaru and Te Whiti and talked the matter over with them, and, if it had not been for the action of certain persons who went about instigating and prompting the Natives to acts of discontent, we should have had no trouble on the Waimate Plains. But, further trouble having taken place, what was to be done? We are told by the honorable member for Grey and Bell that the Government left the settlers to themselves. Now, first of all, there was a force at hand—not a very large force, I admit—but we had good reason to believe, a belief justified by results, that the Natives had no desire to disturb the peace, or to do anything beyond asserting their right to the land. Well, we took a number of prisoners. Some of them are here now. We sent up a large force, but we declined—and we decline now—to consent to any demand which might bring about a most disastrous war. If there is a place in this colony which has suffered severely from the effects of a Maori war, that place is Taranaki, and I hope that no man on either side of the House, either to gain office or avoid losing it, will do anything to jeopardize the peace of the country. I say that we can afford to be patient with these people. If they spake our language, if they understood our laws, if they could reason with us as we can with ourselves, I would myself make one to go to-morrow and enforce our position. But we were told that the unfulfilled promises were few and far between. Sir, the country from the White Cliffs to the Waitotara is strewn with unfulfilled promises—some of them fourteen or fifteen years old. There is a report on the table to that effect, made by Mr. Parris to Charles Brown and James Mackay, and signed in my presence; but from the White Cliffs passing through every block down to the boundary of the confiscation at Waitotara, unfulfilled promises are to be found everywhere. We are told that the Natives are in possession of the “promised” land. That is true of two blocks certainly; but what could they do with it? They could not sell it; they had not even a scrap of

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writing to show that they were in possession of it; and to allow the Natives to say that the land was theirs, was simply a means of spinning out the matter until the Europeans should take it away again. But that is not all. Even amongst the loyal people reserves were promised but were never given to them, and, what is more, reserves made for them fourteen years ago had been purchased by Government officers—a long stretch of country set apart for these people and their children had simply been mopped up by Government officials. Sir, I was for many years a member of the Native Affairs Committee, and while a member I attended that Committee regularly. I brought before it many petitions myself, and heard them examined into and reported upon, and in many cases where Maoris have attempted to enter into explanations of reserves which had been promised to them and never given, they have been ruled out of order. It was said that these Maoris were merely “trying it on.” I came to believe myself that these statements relative to reserves had no foundation in fact, and it was not till I came into office that I became aware of the fact that reserves to the extent of thousands of acres had been promised, and that these promises remained unfulfilled, and are at this moment a disgrace to the English name. I was not put into office for the purpose of fulfilling them, but I am in office now, and I am fulfilling them; but the honorable gentlemen opposite were in office for years, and never stirred a finger in that direction. They were the persons to do it. They took the land and made these promises. They allowed these promises to go by, and they allowed their own officers to buy up the land for themselves. They even did something beyond that. They sent up a man to select reserves for those Natives who had awards from the Compensation Court. This man had a European partner, and when the Natives went to him to have their land pointed out he said, “If I give you this piece of land, will you sell it to my partner at 10s. an acre?” And, if they said “No,” the land was not given to them.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Who was that?

Mr. SHEEHAN.—He was a person in the employ of the Native Land Office. Sir, I repeat, that, from the White Cliffs to the Waitotara River reserves from 15,000 to 50 acres have been promised, and have not been granted. What is the result? The House will remember the gallant and generous conduct of the chief Wiremu Kingi when the “Lord Worsley” was wrecked at Taranaki. His treatment of the crew and passengers is remembered with gratitude; and where is he now? He is in the prison at Mount Cook; and, if you ask him why he is there, he tells you that it is because he has not been able to get the land that was promised to him fifteen years ago. In the next case, where an unmistakable promise had been made, it took something like six weeks to hunt up the faintest trace of the record of the promise; and it was at last found in a musty book in the possession of a gentleman who is now on the Supreme Court bench, Mr. Justice Richmond. The owner was told that he could not sell his land or lease it, and was

driven, like the rest of the people under Te Whiti's influence, to plough it. That is why I believe the Maori people who have taken possession of this land will do no harm, unless they are badly advised; and I have reason to believe that they are being badly advised, not by those gentlemen who compose the Opposition in this House, but by a class of persons who, I believe, would be glad to see blood shed. Now, Sir, let me say this: that, beyond the importance of preserving the public peace and saving the credit of the colony, this House owes a duty to the South Island not to plunge it into war. The South Island is part of the colony, and, if you precipitate a war, the chances are that the southern settlers will make a demand for Separation. I hope we shall do nothing that will lead to such a result. I am a Provincialist, and have provincial sympathies; but I am one of those who would sooner cut off my right hand than saddle the people of the South Island with an expense such as they have had before. The honorable gentleman did not speak by the record when he spoke of the broken promises of the present Government. He must have been speaking of the previous Government, because I never had any occasion to make promises to the Natives. I had rather to remind them of the fact that certain conditions of the law with regard to land in this country were about to be fulfilled, and then I became aware that there were unfulfilled promises in existence which led them to take up that position. There are no unfulfilled promises of this Government; and, if any of our officers had made promises without authority, we should have said "Good-bye" to them. I shall feel no regret if the Opposition succeed in carrying their amendment. They will then have an opportunity of settling this difficulty. They will have time to retire the dishonored Bills they have spoken of, and bring about that peace and prosperity which they say cannot be brought about as long as the present Government remain in office. They will be able to abolish the Native Land Court—refuse the Natives the right to sell or lease their land; and, when they carry out all the proposals of the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District, I have no doubt they will be received at the Parihaka with triumphal arches. The leader of the Opposition, in his speech a few days ago, said, very properly, that he expected to hear that the Government blamed their predecessors for these troubles among the Maori people. Nothing can be truer or more candid, because beyond all doubt those whose places we took are certainly the persons responsible for the position of affairs. I do not blame the honorable member for Selwyn individually, but I speak of what was called the "continuous Ministry," of which no man knows the beginning or the end, which took a different shape every three or four months, and which, I believe, every member of the House entered for a short time. The honorable gentleman says that Native discontent exists throughout the country. I conclude he means throughout the North Island. Now, he gave no practical proof that that is a fact, although I know there are places of which it

may be asserted. I have referred to the Waimate Plains, and I think that the House, having heard me, will agree that, with respect to the Waimate Plains and the troubles there, my honorable friends on that side are the parties on whom the blame should rest. I shall now go to the other cases. First of all, take the Thames case. What is that case? It is really about the survey of a piece of land. That land was Government land, bought by our predecessors in office. Acting upon their bargain in good faith that the transaction was fair and right, we went to survey it, and on that survey being made the offence was committed. Now, it appears, singularly enough, that this offence was supposed to be committed upon a Maori. Honorable members who have read the story will remember that the attacking party warned the Europeans to clear out or they would be shot. I saw the man who was wounded by the Natives myself in the hospital. He happens to be a European, but, by reason of his descent from the Spanish race, he is darker than most half-castes, and the Maoris fired at him, thinking he was a member of the opposing tribe. Now, what action did we take in regard to that? Some people would ask us to march up a large force, to run the risk of blood being shed, and of a war being started. We did not do so. We simply took steps among their own people. We obtained the services of men who for the last fourteen years were opposed to us—the Hauhaus, of Piako, and Tukukino at the Thames, who, from the first, has been a staunch supporter of Tawhiao, the Maori King. These men met with me, advised me, and assisted me, and spent several days in endeavouring to get those people delivered up to justice. Even though they temporarily failed to do so, it was better for the whole Maori people to see that some of the principal chiefs, who had been opposed to us for years, were to be found working with a will to uphold the law. The fact that they would not help us to take the offenders by force of arms is nothing against that argument. Now I will take the case of the Bay of Islands outrage, in which four people were killed and two wounded. Firstly, the transaction was a private transaction between private persons and Maori people. Secondly, it was a transaction so unknown to the Maoris themselves that even the tribe to which those people belonged did not know of it until after the thing took place. Thirdly, they are people so loyal that I am certain, in a very short time, you will find them bringing down those men to be tried by the ordinary Courts of law. We are told that we never employ the Maori chiefs in these things—that one thing the Maoris are not satisfied with is, that we keep them aloof. As a matter of fact, this is the first time that the leaders of the Maori people have been asked to assist and have assisted the Government, and it will be seen that the larger portion of the charges against me are made because I asked the Maori chiefs to assist me in governing their own people. I meant to refer more fully to other points in the honorable gentleman's speech, but I think I can afford to pass by the case of Mr. Luckie. Mr. Luckie, I may say, is "lucky." We

cannot improve the position of affairs by talking over it. The matter was discussed last session, and beyond all doubt the point was settled. The chief accusation was that we had taken into the Civil Service a person who was not a member of it. I pointed out then, and I do now, that our predecessors in office had simply year after year brought in officers from outside the Civil Service, and had even gone Home to get people for offices in the Civil Service. We had a perfect right to take a man who had been living in the colony for many years—a practical colonist—and ask him to fill a public office if we wanted to fill it. With regard to the charges against myself, it is quite true that a delay took place in the appointment of a Resident Magistrate at Lyttelton; but an appointment could not be made without causing similar applications from towns of the same character. For instance, at Port Chalmers the work was being fairly performed by a Magistrate who was also engaged in other places; but the House knows that there was a great deal of pressure to appoint a Magistrate to take care of that work. With regard to Addington Gaol, the charge is that delay took place in the completion of the work. When we came into office the work was in hand. I made inquiry, and I was told that this work, which was to cost about £3,000, was being carried on without plans or specifications. The officers in charge never saw the plans. I was told that an architect somewhere had made drawings, but he would not give them up until he was paid for his work. That was the administration of my friends on the opposite side. What is more, the work was not necessary. When I went there, in 1877, I found the whole body of the prisoners actually sitting down smoking pipes in the exercise-yards. I could get them work seven miles away, if I found them free passes and brought them home with free passengers. I feel convinced the works now being done at that gaol are quite sufficient for the purpose. Now, with regard to the charge made about the Lunatic Asylums, and the want of proper provision for those poor people, I do not under-estimate the importance of that subject. If there be any persons who require care it is those who cannot help themselves; but I say that the accommodation existing now is as good as when we came into office, and in many cases it is much better. We have been told by the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums that to meet his requirements in one year he wanted—how much do you think? A quarter of a million of money. It was impossible for the Government to find it. We could not even borrow the money for that purpose. All that we could do was to make the best possible provision from time to time with the funds at our disposal. Now I come to the question of the “Hinemoa.” Very few people have used that steamer less than myself. When I look at the use of the “Luna” in previous years, I can say that as Native Minister I have been exceedingly moderate. I went to Gisborne, Tauranga, and Auckland in the “Hinemoa” some time ago, but I only did public business while I was there; I refused to address a public meeting, and I left at once when my work was done. I contend that

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that is the proper use of the steamer. If we were to move for a return of the use of the Government steamers, I think that, on the whole, we should come out better than our predecessors. I see my friend the honorable member for Clive present. Let me tell a story about the “Luna.” In 1876 an important division was taking place in this House on the Piako-Swamp question. That division was carried on the casting vote of the Speaker. I was then in Napier, and so was the honorable member for Clive, and also one member of the Opposition, to which I belonged. We left Napier in the “Luna” on one of the finest days I ever saw in my life: the sea was as smooth as the carpet on this floor. When we got off the Kidnappers we turned back—I think it was on account of the glass going down. We had a beautiful passage on the way back; and we got here just too late to vote. In the meantime the division had taken place, and the Government were saved by the casting vote of the Speaker. We have not yet arrived at that stage, but if we are allowed to remain in office we will strive to improve, if possible. Now, Sir, we come to the other charge which has been made against the Government—that of using the telegraph line for electioneering purposes. In answer to that, I can say for myself and all my colleagues, that in every instance every message sent with regard to the elections was paid for out of our own pockets.

Mr. ORMOND.—When?

Mr. SHEEHAN.—That will be explained.

Mr. ORMOND.—When?

Mr. SHEEHAN.—They were paid for from day to day when they became due. I can show my cheque-book to support what I say. This was not the case in the old days. In those good old days the members of the Government used the wires for their ordinary needs.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, no.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The honorable member says “No, no;” I say, Yes. On inquiry being made, it was found that the whole of the members of the Government used the wires for electioneering purposes. Fortunately for them the time has gone by when these messages were burnt; but the fact remains, that the wires were used for the purposes I have indicated. A charge was made against myself and my colleagues to the effect that we had used a certain public work in Napier for political purposes—the Napier bridge. As to that, I may say that when we came into office we found a promise five years old which had been made for that bridge by the previous Government. We found an amount for that bridge on certain estimates left behind by that Government. We resolved to carry out the work, but for a time we were stopped from carrying it out on account of the non-arrival of Sir John Cooke’s Harbour Report. When I went there, on the occasion referred to by the leader of the Opposition, I went to redeem the promise which had been made to the people of Napier. The Opposition also charges us with having used Government officers for electioneering purposes. This is a most extraordinary charge to emanate from such a quarter. What took place in 1876 with regard to the election for the seat which

Mr. Tomoana now occupies in this House? The Government officers were used freely all round to canvass, and one young gentleman candidly admitted that he had done certain things because he understood he was Returning Officer for the Government candidate. And that was no uncommon case. I know, and others know, that, when it came to a party fight, almost every officer, in one department at least, became an apostle for those in power. I have referred before to the professions that have been made by the leading members of the Opposition; but, notwithstanding all their professions, I now tell this House that they do not want liberal measures; they do not want to see manhood suffrage on fair terms; they do not want liberal land laws. Their sole aim is to get on the Government benches, and the House will then have its eyes opened as to what their intentions really are, and will be able to see what amount of sincerity there is in their professions. I shall touch upon two points before I sit down, and I will address myself to the Maori members more particularly. I will tell the Maori members this: that when they are promised by the Opposition that they shall have Ministers of their own, that there shall be a cessation of all Native Land Courts—when they are promised by the Opposition that there shall be no more leases or sales of land—

Mr. HALL.—Mr. Tomoana never said that we had made such promises.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The House heard the statement made perfectly well. I refer to the statement made by Mr. Tomoana. When they are told that Waikato will be given back—when they are told that the Maori prisoners will be released—these promises were not made, I presume—

Mr. HALL.—Is the honorable member suggesting that I made these promises—that any such promises were ever made by me? If so, I will give an answer.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I should like to have the answer.

Mr. HALL.—I am asking whether the honorable member is suggesting that such promises were ever made by me.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I have heard so outside in the lobbies. I have not heard him make these promises.—(Laughter.)—Honorable members may laugh, but I say we are told that such promises were made.

Mr. HALL.—There is no foundation whatever for the statement.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—When the Maori members of this House are told all these things, promises are given to them that will not be fulfilled; they are simply hoodwinked to give support to a party that has done nothing for the Maori people. A year ago they insisted on the abolition of the Maori dual vote. What do they offer now? They make certain offers—certain promises that cannot be fulfilled. The attempt made by them last session to shift the Government from office failed. The attempt this session to get into power and retain it by means of a reconstruction will fail also, I believe. It is impossible to say what may happen, but, for myself and my colleagues, I will say we will be no party to any such

proposals. If we are beaten, honorable members of the Opposition will be left to select members from their own side. Coalition, I say, is not only impossible, but unfair and dishonest, and not a single man on these benches will listen to any proposal made to join in the formation of a coalition Ministry. Of course I may be told they do not want me. It may be so. I will bide my time. I am perfectly certain they will not have Sir George Grey. He will bide his time also, and, to my mind, a very short time indeed. There are on this side of the House men whom the Opposition would like to have; and not one of them will join the new Government. We are determined that, if we are beaten on this occasion, we will stand with our own party. If we are beaten, we will take defeat in a proper parliamentary sense. It may be so—I do not know—but if the honorable gentlemen opposite succeed on this occasion by a vote or two, then their troubles really begin. Having got possession of the coveted stake, their trouble really commences. When those who are to be rewarded get their reward, the number who do not get a reward will be large indeed, and it will take the honorable gentlemen opposite all their time to keep them. I say to them, "You will have to do your own business amongst yourselves." I beg to apologize for detaining the House so long, and to say that if my advice were adopted we should go to a division at once. I think it is the best thing possible to bring the question to an issue.

Mr. HALL.—Statements have been made in the course of this debate which I consider affect my personal character. I do not propose to trouble the House to go into that subject now, but I shall take the earliest opportunity to call attention to the matter and make a statement. Until then I ask the House to suspend its judgment in the matter.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Was it something said by me?

Mr. HALL.—You will hear.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Divide, divide.

Dr. WALLIS.—The cry has been raised just now that we should divide, and that cry confirms me in the determination to address the House this night.

Mr. MOORHOUSE.—Divide, divide, divide, divide.

Dr. WALLIS.—I claim your protection, Sir, against what seems to me the rude behaviour of the honorable member for Ashley.

Mr. MOORHOUSE.—Divide, divide, divide, divide.

Dr. WALLIS.—As I was unable—through sickness, I may say—to address the House last evening, I think that I am not transgressing what is right when I persist to-night in making a few remarks in connection with the important subject before the House. I stand, Sir, in a very peculiar position—in a different position perhaps from any other member of this House. I learn from the newspapers this morning that I am virtually standing, as it were, with a rope round my neck, and that if this House chose to pull it tight I should be lifted up from the floor of the House into thin air. Statements have been made here to

which I would briefly refer. It has been said, for instance, that this debate has been characterized by a tone of speaking very superior to what we had in an analogous debate during the last session of Parliament. Speaking of that, I can assure the young members of this House that we who were members of this House before know perfectly well—at least, I do—that there is not the slightest ground for affirming that the tone of debate has been better than it was in July and August last. In what respect is it better? I certainly admit that the leader of the Opposition on that occasion and the Hon. the Premier did give some hard blows to each other; but the present debate has been characterized by something which did not exist in that former debate. There has been, what people in the Scotch language say, “Claw you my back and I’ll claw yours.” The past is the parent of the present, and I would refer a little to the Opposition of the past, in order to throw some light on the conduct of the Opposition which is now in the House. I believe that every person here is now convinced that the Opposition of last Parliament blundered egregiously. When the usual Address in reply to His Excellency’s Speech was moved the leader of the Opposition then tabled an amendment to the effect that His Excellency’s present Advisers had so mismanaged the business of the country that they did not possess the confidence of the House. This charge of maladministration was deemed to be proved by the late Parliament. The Opposition of that time, it ought to be observed, neither praised nor blamed the policy of the Government. When they were asked whether they would carry out the liberal measures enunciated in the Governor’s Speech they declined to answer; they rather disingenuously avoided giving a distinct Yes or No to that question. Many of them were Liberals. They were under the necessity of securing the antiquated and Conservative supporters, and therefore they declined to pledge themselves. They declined to pledge themselves to carry out the Liberal policy of last session, and, in declining to do that, they secured certain votes. By ingeniously combining together the antiquated Conservatives on their own side of the House and weak-kneed Liberal members on this side of the House, they obtained the majority which carried the no-confidence amendment and led to a dissolution. The Government were condemned for maladministration, and an appeal was made to the constituencies; and the electors of the colony, being appealed to, took little or no notice of the maladministration that was alleged, but they returned to this House an overwhelming majority of members all pledged to carry out the liberal—I may say democratic—measures enunciated in the Governor’s Speech. They were all pledged to carry those measures out. If we carry out our pledges—if we do what we were sent here to do—then there must be a dissolution at the end of this session, and the first session of the seventh Parliament of New Zealand must be its last session. A dissolution is inevitable if we are to carry out the measures which we were sent here

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to assist in carrying out. What have the Opposition done? They have drawn a herring across the scent. They tell us: You shall have your liberal measures, provided you first turn out the present occupants of the Government benches—if you accept those measures on that condition. The amendment now before the House shows that the present Opposition are not one whit wiser than the members of the late Opposition. As I have already said, the majority of members have been returned for the purpose of giving effect to certain important constitutional measures, such as the extension of the franchise, the shortening of the duration of Parliament, and the redistribution of seats on the basis of population. These few measures might be carried in a fortnight, or a month at the furthest; and, when these measures have been carried, then will be the time for making another appeal to the country, and for taking a new departure. These measures are greatly required in the present circumstances of the colony. Following in the footsteps of their predecessors, the present members of the Opposition have tabled an amendment, the effect of which would be to postpone indefinitely the carrying out of these important constitutional measures. What is the amendment they have tabled? I will prove to this honorable House, by the wording of it, that it is insolent, deceptive, and unconstitutional. We were sent here for the purpose of giving effect to the wishes and desires of the people of this country. The leader of the Opposition, in moving the amendment, affirms that we, the members of this House, are prepared to give effect to the desires of the people. How condescending! Is not such condescension really insolence? Again, the amendment appears to me to be deceptive. Pray, what is the meaning of it? I attach a certain meaning to the amendment—that we agree to give effect to certain measures. Other people attach another meaning to that amendment. You may put a dozen interpretations upon the amendment which the leader of the Opposition has laid before the House. Again, the amendment is unconstitutional. Our form of government is Cabinet government. The members of the Cabinet all join together, with the Premier as it were binding them together. The amendment is unconstitutional in this respect, that it proposes to separate those members, and finds fault with the Ministry as now constituted. They do not condescend to tell us which of the Ministers they wish to get rid of, and in that respect the amendment seems to me to be unconstitutional. If this amendment is carried, and those who have brought it forward come across to this side of the House, then I am convinced they will no longer trouble themselves with the extension of the franchise, or triennial Parliaments, or a redistribution of the constituencies. Farewell, Sir—a long farewell—to all attempts to improve the Constitution of this colony. We shall fall back into the old jog-trot state of things which the Premier has been endeavouring to rescue us from. There will come once again a reign of dulness and of governing families, and we shall then obtain that political rest which the honorable member for Egmont

was so anxious for some two years ago. The wishes, desires, and aspirations of the people will be disappointed. Sir, the amendment now before the House alludes vaguely to the policy of the Government, the policy which the Opposition intend to follow, the measures which are mentioned in His Excellency's Speech. These are measures which the Colony of New Zealand, in the present stage of its history, really requires. At the beginning of a country's history we should endeavour to give to the country a good, sound, solid Constitution; and that, Sir, is what the Premier and his colleagues are endeavouring to do by bringing forward the aforesaid constitutional measures. We are just now founding a new nation, and the foundations which we are laying should be broad, and deep, and strong, and just. The way to lay such foundations at this period of our history is to pass such measures as were referred to in the Governor's Speech. The colony at the present day requires these measures to be given effect to. In this time of enlightenment and independence it is dangerous, it is demoralizing, not to give every class of the people a vote connected with the government of the country; in this time of change and progress even three years seem to be too long a period to invest the representatives with power; and in these times the growing sense of justice amongst us rebels against one man having twice or thrice or ten times the voting or electoral power of another man. Under these circumstances the measures to which I have referred are urgently required in this colony. The Government have brought forward these measures, they are here to pass them, and, by passing them, to amend and extend the Constitution. They have worked to bring these things pass. Sir George Grey has laboured earnestly and energetically in order to educate the people into the acceptance of these important and progressive measures. He deserves all credit for what he has done in this respect. The people of New Zealand are now eager for the measures; which have been treated with such half-heartedness by the leader of the Opposition and by the honorable member for Kaiapoi. The Government have educated the people, and made them ready for these measures; and what are the members of the Opposition now doing? They are determined that the Government shall somehow be baffled in their endeavour to carry out these measures, and the way in which it is proposed to baffle them is this: they profess to be in favour of the measures, but say, "Let us turn these gentlemen off the Treasury benches, and then we will carry these measures ourselves." The honorable leader and members of the Opposition no doubt profess at the present time to be favourable to these important measures. I am fully confident that they would promise that if they were only on the Treasury benches they would give us an extension of the suffrage, triennial Parliaments, and more equal electoral power; but I am at the same time equally confident that if they were once on the Treasury benches such pressure would be brought to bear on them by the fossilized members of their party as would compel them to wriggle out of their promises. They

could not help doing so. They know the present Government have educated the people to receive these measures, yet they now ask us to turn the Government off their seats before they will consent to these measures being passed. They say virtually, "Turn them off, put us on, and then we will give you all you want. Indeed, there is nothing at variance with our old professions, nothing at variance with our former practice, that we will not accede to if you will consent to put us at the head of affairs." But, if they were once on this side of the House, I am convinced that they would change their minds. They would see things in a different light from that in which they see them now. We should find that, if they were on this side of the House, and carried these measures, there would be a necessity for a dissolution; and they are not prepared to face the country. If the leader of the Opposition were to go to the country, and if he were to stand on the hustings, where members are sometimes roughly treated, the first question his constituents would put to him would be, "Is it true you stole the clothes of Sir George Grey while he was bathing?" They would never pass these measures. Suppose they were in office. We should have the honorable member for Selwyn as Prime Minister, and it is said the honorable member for Bruce will be Colonial Treasurer, and I think the honorable member for Geraldine is to be Minister for Public Works. I am not in the secrets of the Opposition, and I do not know for certain, but these are the rumours. I do not know who is to be Postmaster-General, for instance. I know that the present Government, in appointing a Postmaster-General, selected the most kind-hearted man that they could find, but other Governments have always selected the weakest-minded men. Well, this Cabinet meet together for the first time; and what do they do? The question before them is how to get out of it—how not to do it. They have promised to carry these measures, and they want to get out of the promise. At the Cabinet meeting the Premier, seconded by the honorable member for Egmont, says, "We will get out of it in this way: We will knock the whole thing on the head—we will propose quadrennial Parliaments instead of triennial Parliaments." Another member of the party says, "Oh! that will not do: what we must do will be to emasculate the measures; we must tone them down until the democratic vigour has departed out of them." Another gentleman says, "Oh, there is a better course than that. We have been elected for five years. We will postpone carrying the measures until the present Parliament has got into its dotage, four or five years hence." That will be agreed to. They will come down to this House, and these measures, which seem to us immensely important, will be indefinitely postponed. That is how they are to get out of this difficulty. The amendment which is now before the House condemns more particularly the *personnel* of the Ministry. It is a remarkable fact that there is in it no allusion whatever to the question of maladministration. I beg the House to notice this: Here is an amendment which does not refer to maladministration;

yet every speech has been directed to the question of maladministration. That is singular. I am aware that, in speeches in connection with the Address in Reply, and in connection with motions of no confidence, every latitude is allowed; but it is a latitude which is altogether improper if it allows a debate to be carried on in connection with a subject that is not so much as alluded to in the amendment itself. Those gentlemen have all addressed the House on what they have called the maladministration of the Government. A few faults and weaknesses—perhaps a few errors—of the Government have been collected or invented—I do not know which—and these errors or weaknesses on the part of the Government have been set before the House in the darkest colours by the orators of the Opposition. It must be admitted that there may have been some truth in the charges brought by the Opposition against the Ministry. It is a fact that all Ministries blunder; but the present Ministry, in my opinion, has blundered vastly less than the “continuous Ministry” before them, or any other Ministry anterior to them. All Ministries are too prone to make promises which they cannot keep, to interfere in matters in which they ought not to interfere, and to be more extravagant with the money of the country than they ought to be. All Ministries are more or less liable to do these things; and it is very gratifying to members like myself when we see remarkable watchfulness against maladministration, even if the motive which influences that watchfulness is somewhat questionable. We like to see watchfulness: but we should be just and merciful. We should endeavour to do justice even to our enemies, and we should remember this, that it is almost impossible for a weak Government to escape from errors of this description. The “continuous Ministry” was a strong Ministry, and they had no excuse for the errors and the mistakes which they made; but a weak Ministry has excuses. A Government which holds office only upon the votes of the trimmers or the independents of the House cannot help, at times, doing wrong. A weak Government is always tempted to play fast-and-loose with promises, to exercise patronage in a peculiar manner, and to keep the bait dangling before gentlemen of easy virtue. Throughout this debate I have been much struck with one thing, and that is, that the faults or mistakes of the Government pointed out in the debate a month ago have not been so much as alluded to in this debate. We heard a great deal then about the Tapanui Railway job. What has become of it? I have not heard a word about it in this debate. We heard a great deal about the £2,000 given to Mr. Larnach, and yet, with the exception of the allusion of the honorable member for Kaiapoi this afternoon, it has not even been alluded to in this debate. We also heard then a great deal about the vast amount of improper patronage of which the Government had been guilty, but nothing of that sort has been said this session in my presence. Again, such objections as these have been made against the Government: We are told the law has not been properly administered. But there

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has been no evidence to show that the laws of the country are not administered as well now as when the last Ministry was in office. A great deal has been made of the neglect of lunatic asylums, and the honorable member for Selwyn appeared to take a great interest in that matter. I too take a great interest in lunatic asylums. I have been an inmate of a lunatic asylum for a whole year. Some honorable members appear to be astonished. An honorable gentleman near me looks at me as though I would bite him. Another appears to think, “It must have been a very well-conducted asylum, for you are certainly quite cured.” I was there, Sir, as surgeon to the asylum, and not as a patient; and I have always taken a very great interest in matters of this kind. I say no evidence has been given to us to show that there has been any neglect in this respect. But the thing which has most amused me in this debate is the complaint made against the Ministry of interfering with the elections. Floods of indignation have been poured out against them for what they have done in connection with these elections. Sir, we all know that it is with Ministries as with individuals—“Self-preservation is the first law”—and I ask, If these very gentlemen who have been accusing Ministers of improperly interfering with the elections had been in office, would they have acted differently? I will promise them my vote if any one of them will dare to rise up and, without laugh or blush, say they would not have done the same things if they had been in office. Not one of them, without laughter or blushing, could make that assertion. The existence of a Ministry is at stake, and the telegraph is at hand. They may use it, surely? They constantly do use it for all sorts of purposes; and it may be that in sending a telegram they have made a mistake, and not paid for it. It is the same thing with reference to the railway, and with reference to the “Hinemoa.” I say, if the leaders of the Opposition had been in office, and if they were told that they would get two or three seats in Auckland if only the honorable member for Selwyn, being Premier, was there in a day or two, he would immediately send for Captain Fairchild, and within half an hour steam would be up, and he would be on board his vessel; and would very soon be complaining that they were not going half fast enough, and would tell the captain to go at full speed, so that he might get to Auckland in time. It is perfectly certain that, if these gentlemen had been in office when the elections were going on, they would have done exactly the same thing as the present Ministry did. There is certainly one true charge brought against Ministers—and that is, their extravagance. I admit at once that the Grey Ministry have been nearly as extravagant as the “continuous Ministry” which went before them. But, Sir, till within the last two years or so this colony had been for twenty years previously under the government of a particular class, and that class had been teaching the Government extravagance for twenty years. Now, they have suddenly become prudent, and pretend to be economists in order to get back into the Government again. Who are they who first

began the debt of the colony? I say the class now represented by the Opposition, and who are crying out for economy. Who are the class who stirred up the Maori war fifteen or sixteen years ago, and so led to extravagance? I say the very class who are now blaming the Ministry for extravagance. Who are they who forced the Civil Service into its present overgrown and overpaid condition but the class who are now finding fault with the extravagance of the gentlemen on those benches? Who are the people who bought residences for Ministers, and sent Home for the "Hinemoa"? Those very gentlemen who are now crying out against extravagance. Who are they who encouraged the borrowing policy, which, like alcohol, gives a little relief for a moment at the cost of immense suffering afterwards? Who inaugurated this but the gentlemen who are now complaining that the Government are not sufficiently economical? Why, Sir, it was the class to which these gentlemen belong which created the current of extravagance; the State ship got into that current, and all the present Ministry can do is to try and get that ship out of it again. The present Government went into office on the understanding that they would do all in their power to curtail expense; but they were not strong enough to do all that they could wish in that respect. One feature in this debate has pained me very much, and that is, the personal attacks upon the Premier. In the last debate, a month or two ago, and in this debate, very hard things have been aimed at him. He was charged in this House, in the last Parliament, and he has been charged in the Opposition Press outside, with being an anarchist, a revolutionist; with wanting to set up a personal government—a despotism; with setting class against class. Our venerable and worthy Premier an anarchist and revolutionist! The very idea is absurd. Statesmen who bring forward liberal measures, as he has done—are they men to promote anarchy and revolution? These are not measures that tend to destroy order and liberty. They are reform measures. The Premier and his colleagues have, as it were, kindled a fire under the kettle of reform. I remember, in reading the London *Punch* long ago, being very much struck with a remarkable cartoon in it. It was this: In the middle of the picture was a large vessel filled with Parliamentary Bills. This vessel was the reform cauldron or kettle. Beside it was John Bright, who was stooping down and trying to blow into a flame a coal under the kettle. It was a small live coal, and he, with his great strong lungs, was trying to kindle it into flame, saying at the same time, "I hope it will soon boil." I see that kettle now, but the figures round it are different. Instead of John Bright, I see the honorable member for Christchurch City, Sir George Grey. He is trying to kindle the coal, and on the other side, pretending to help him, is the honorable member for Selwyn. He is pretending to kindle the fire, but he is at the same time taking out a syringe and squirting water on it, while around him are a number of figures representing his followers and the Opposition newspapers, all with small syringes in their hands,

pretending to help reform, but really trying to extinguish it. The Premier has also been accused of being an autocrat—of seeking to establish personal government and Cæsarism. Let me examine that charge briefly. I wonder if those who make this charge understand the meaning of the words. It is a pity they have taken flight and left the House, or I would explain the meaning of these words for their benefit. Do they know what "autocrat" means? The Emperor of Russia is an autocrat, and so is the Sultan of Turkey. Is our Premier like them? Do they know what personal government is? That is an expression which is much used by English papers now. Lord Beaconsfield has been accused of establishing personal government because he has been trying to give the Queen larger power and authority than the Liberals think right. Now, is anything of that sort shown by the Premier? Can they accuse him of trying to invest the late Governor, or the present Governor, with greater power? That would be personal government. They accuse him, also, of Cæsarism. That, of course, is the kind of government which prevailed all over the world during the first centuries of our era. Is there any resemblance between our Premier and the twelve or twenty Cæsars? No, Sir; no more than between the leader of the Opposition and the Devil himself. But I make a mistake: there is a resemblance between the leader of the Opposition and his Satanic Majesty. His Satanic Majesty formerly belonged to a higher and better sphere; but he left that sphere of his own free will, and finally turned up in a very bad world, whose name is never mentioned to ears polite. There, according to worthy John Milton, he was elected as representative, and was sent to this world. He came and played many sad tricks, and to him we owe nearly all our woes. There is, therefore, some resemblance between that personage and the leader of the Opposition. He, too, once lived in another and higher place, and left it of his own free will. He, too, turned up in the neighbourhood of the everlasting snows, and was sent here as a representative, and ever since he came here he has been stirring up bad blood amongst us. Perhaps I am going a little too far: I apologize for having done so. There is no resemblance in reality. The honorable gentleman is so kind, so amiable, so worthy, that I think it is a pity he has taken a part in the arena of politics. The Premier has been accused of setting class against class. All great men, from the beginning of the world downwards, have been accused of doing the same thing. Even in the very earliest times, such a great man as Moses was said to have set class against class, for he set a class of slaves against their masters. Then, again, patriots, philanthropists, reformers, both religious and social, have invariably been calumniated as turning the world upside down and setting class against class. I do not know whether the Premier pretends to be, or thinks that he is, either a great or a good man, but he has been calumniated and misrepresented and persecuted as much as if he had been one of the greatest and best of men. What in the world has the Premier of this colony done

are given here. I then gave another quotation, of which I will now give the actual words. They are as follow:—

"In company with Dr. Traill, the rector of Schull, I met Dr. McCormick, the dispensary physician of the Parish of Kilmore. He stated that, on Tuesday, 9th March, he had met a man—a father—tottering along the road: a rope was over his shoulder, and at the other end of the rope, streeling along the ground, were two dead children, whom he was with difficulty dragging to the grave."—(Trench, p. 391.)

I may say that there are other statements infinitely more shocking showing the ways in which these persons perished by most dreadful deaths. Then, Sir, with regard to what Lord Beaconsfield said on the occasion, what I said to the House was this: that I believed that the effect of the land laws as at present existing was to harden the human heart—that the very landlords who were kind to their dependants in times of difficulty, and would give large sums of money to alleviate distress, yet appeared unconscious of the misery of the millions; and I said that the famine in Ireland was to be attributed to man, and to the laws which prevailed—laws which could be altered—and that the Government had been repeatedly—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable gentleman is now enlarging upon his original speech, and going beyond a personal explanation.

Sir G. GREY.—I was only condensing, Sir; but I will not continue. I then quoted certain words used by Lord Beaconsfield. This is taken from the *London Times* of 20th November, 1868. It is a quotation from a part of a speech—all that relates to this subject—made by the then Premier of England, Mr. Disraeli, when addressing the electors at Aylesbury, on the occasion of a general election. After describing the deplorable condition of Ireland twenty-five years ago, he said,—

"But a greater power than man produced an effect on their economical condition. That happened in Ireland which was infinitely greater in its effects than any political or social revolution which ever occurred in any country of the world. The population was so reduced that the state of affairs—the monstrous state of affairs—to which I have adverted, that of a population greater, to the square mile, than in any other European country, and perhaps in any Asiatic country except China, ceased. And what has happened to Ireland during the last quarter of a century? The people are now no longer in the condition in which they were: they have better raiment, better residences; and they have much better food.—(A Voice: 'Three cheers for the famine.')—Well, you have given three cheers before this for things which have not done so much good to man as that famine. I was about to say, when I was interrupted by a voice that I think is familiar to me—(laughter and cheers)—that the progress of Ireland during the last twenty years has been more rapid than the progress of England."

Colonel TRIMBLE.—May I ask the honorable gentleman to read the context a little before and a little after what he has read? I saw the honorable gentleman this morning, and he pro-

Sir G. Grey

mised to read the context. I would like him to do so, and I would then ask him how he can reconcile it with the words uttered by himself. He said, "Then, when a voice in the crowd which Mr. Disraeli recognized cried out, 'Three cheers for the famine in Ireland,' Mr. Disraeli assented, and three cheers were given; and, when finished, Mr. Disraeli said—" I apprehend, Sir, that that is entirely away from what the honorable gentleman has now stated, and also still further away from the context. I have the context on both sides in my hand; but of course the House will not care to have it except the honorable gentleman himself read it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The matter must stand over for the present, as the time has now arrived for the presentation of the Address.

Mr. KELLY.—Would the Premier favour us with the authority from which he has quoted?

Sir G. GREY.—"Realities of Irish Life," by Trench.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Mr. SPEAKER reported that, accompanied by the mover and seconder, and several other members of the House, he attended on His Excellency at three o'clock, with the Address in reply to the Governor's Speech, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following answer:—

"MR. SPEAKER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

"I thank you for this Address, and for the assurance which it contains that the various measures that may be brought before you will receive your earnest and careful consideration.

"I am at all times desirous that my Government should be in accordance with the representatives of the people in Parliament, and I have therefore taken measures for the formation of a new Administration."

MINISTRY.

Sir G. GREY.—With the permission of the House, I wish to say that myself and my colleagues have placed our resignations in the hands of His Excellency, who was pleased to accept the same, requesting, at the same time, that we would continue to hold office and perform our duty until our successors were appointed; so that we now only occupy the position in the House of holding office until the new Ministry has been formed.

Mr. HALL.—By the indulgence of the House, I wish to state that yesterday afternoon I was sent for by His Excellency, who informed me that his Ministers had resigned, and requested me to form a new Government. After consultation with His Excellency, I agreed to endeavour to do so, and have since then been engaged in that task. I must now ask the House to be good enough to adjourn for the purpose of enabling me to complete the task. I had intended to ask the House to adjourn until Thursday, but I understand from the Prime Minister that supplies for carrying on the public service may be required before then. I therefore ask that the House should adjourn till to-morrow, with the understanding that,

beyond Supply, no further business should be proceeded with, and that the House will then adjourn till Thursday. I shall then, I trust, be able to announce the formation of a Government which will command the approval of His Excellency, the House, and the country. I now move the adjournment of the House until the usual hour to-morrow.

Sir G. GREY.—I second the motion for adjournment, without in any way committing myself to the fact that the Ministry formed will meet with the approval of the House.

The House adjourned at half-past three o'clock.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 8th October, 1879.

The late Speaker — Ministry — Imprest Supply Bill — Ministry.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THE LATE SPEAKER.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I have the honor to inform the Council that I have received the following letter from Mr. George Richardson, acknowledging the receipt of an illuminated copy of the resolution passed by this Council relative to the loss sustained by it through the death of the Hon. Major Richardson :—

“Dunedin, September 17, 1879.

“SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo, forwarding to me an illuminated copy of a resolution of the Legislative Council with regard to the loss the Council has sustained by the death of Major the Hon. Sir John Richardson, lately the Speaker of the Council.

“I have to thank your honorable House for its consideration in forwarding me a copy of the resolution, and to express my deep gratification at the terms in which the Council has given utterance to the sentiments it entertained towards my father, the late Speaker.—I have, &c.,

“GEO. RICHARDSON.

“The Hon. Sir William Fitzherbert,
“Speaker of the Legislative Council,
“Wellington.”

MINISTRY.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—Sir, a communication has been made to the Government by the Hon. Mr. Hall, who is at present engaged in forming an Administration, requesting our assistance in carrying through the Imprest Supply Bill which has only by an accident been delayed since yesterday. I need hardly say we are very happy to give as much assistance as we can. The incoming Government have not been sworn in, and it would be an inconvenient thing, and a discourtesy to this Council, to ask them to pass this Bill unless it was taken charge of by a Cabinet Minister. Consequently, I am here to-day on

purpose to give such assistance as I can towards advancing the public service in passing this Imprest Supply Bill, which may be expected in this Chamber in the course of half an hour. Under these circumstances, I do not think honorable gentlemen will complain if I ask them not to press any business on the Order Paper, although, should it be the wish of the Council, and be to the public advantage, there could be no objection to appointing those Committees which may be necessary to sit in order to clear off petitions and other business. If that course is adopted, I would ask the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson to postpone his motion, and the Hon. Mr. Holmes likewise, and simply to take the appointment of all the Committees proposed by the various honorable gentlemen; after which I propose that we do adjourn until the Imprest Supply Bill comes up from another place. Should that meet with the concurrence of the Council, I should like to move that the Standing Orders be suspended in order to admit of the Imprest Supply Bill passing through all its stages in one day, which is the motion I now make.

Motion agreed to.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL.

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

MINISTRY.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—Sir, with your permission and by the indulgence of the Council, I wish to say a few words in regard to the matter to which I referred yesterday. The Hon. Mr. Hall, desirous of showing that respect which ought to be paid by an incoming Ministry to this branch of the Legislature, in which there is as yet no member of his Government, has asked me to state that he has submitted to His Excellency a list of certain gentlemen whom he has proposed to be appointed to administer the affairs of the country. These are the names: Mr. Whitaker, whom His Excellency will call to this Council, will hold the office of Attorney-General; the Hon. Mr. Hall will take the office of Colonial Secretary and be Prime Minister of the new Government; Major Atkinson will take the offices of Colonial Treasurer and Commissioner of Customs; Mr. Oliver will take the office of Minister of Public Works; Mr. Rolleston will take the offices of Minister of Lands, Immigration, and Education; Mr. Bryce will take the office of Native Minister; Mr. Henare Tomoana will hold office as the Native member of the Executive Council. Mr. Hall begs me to state to the Council that he has not yet completed his arrangements for the Post Office, or the Mines, or the Administration of Justice, but that he is at present engaged in considering how these offices should be filled. He proposes, however, to wait until the arrival of Mr. Whitaker—who may be expected to take his seat in the Council, by virtue of His Excellency's writ of summons, next Tuesday—before those arrangements are made. Mr. Hall expresses the hope that the Council will allow me to ask for an adjournment until Tuesday; and therefore, unless there is any objection on the part of

members of the Council, I will move, That, at its rising, this Council do adjourn until Tuesday, when Mr. Whitaker will be prepared to make a statement as to the policy of the Government. I beg again to say that it is out of personal friendship for Mr. Hall that I make this statement, and that, so far as I am myself concerned, it has no political significance.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I have no objection to take against the proposal. In fact, I am sitting here at this moment entirely out of consideration and courtesy to the Government which is to succeed the one to which I have had the honor of belonging. I think it very reasonable that there should be a certain delay under the circumstances stated by my honorable friend, but I confess I do receive with some little surprise and regret the announcement that the Government which succeeded that to which I belong should not have been able to find a gentleman in the Council to represent them; and we perhaps have some reason to complain, as we have had to do in the past, that we are to be led by a gentleman introduced for that special purpose. I should have been glad if the Hon. Sir Francis Dillon Bell, or if another honorable gentleman who has generally had to differ from me, or even if my predecessor in office, had taken my place and been associated with the Hon. Mr. Hall; but it is worthy of notice that, in consequence of the course adopted, we are to have reintroduced into this Council a gentleman who in years past made himself so useful and was so great an ornament to the discussions of this Council. I have no personal feeling in these remarks, but make them wholly in the interests of the Council. I do regret that it has been found necessary to go outside our ranks to find a member to represent the Government.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 8th October, 1879.

First Reading—Imprest Supply Bill—Ministry.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Christchurch Church Property Trustees Bill.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL.

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

MINISTRY.

Mr. HALL.—Mr. Speaker, when the House last met I stated that I had been intrusted by His Excellency the Governor with the task of proposing to him the names of gentlemen who should form a new Government. Since then I am glad to state that I have been able to submit to His Excellency names which have

Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell

received his approval. They are as follow: Mr. F. Whitaker—who will be appointed to a seat in the Legislative Council—will take the office of Attorney-General; I shall myself take the office of Colonial Secretary with the Premiership, Major Atkinson will take the offices of Colonial Treasurer and Commissioner of Customs, Mr. Oliver will take the office of Minister for Public Works, Mr. Rolleston will take the offices of Minister of Lands and Immigration and Minister of Education, Mr. Bryce will take the office of Minister of Native Affairs, Mr. Henare Tomoana will accept office as a Maori member of the Executive Council. The House will perceive that this does not comprise the full number of eight Ministers which by law may be appointed; but we have thought it desirable not to wait until the full number should be completed, believing that the number announced will be sufficient for the present to carry on the public business. We propose at as early a date as possible to complete the number. It will be seen that provision for the offices of Minister of Mines and Minister of Justice has not yet been decided upon. When the Ministry is complete there will probably have to be a certain redistribution of some of the offices, which we hope will include members from parts of the colony which in this list are not adequately provided for. The gentlemen who have agreed to act with me, having carefully considered the course which it is right to ask this House to pursue, have decided to ask for an adjournment until Tuesday next, for the purpose of enabling us to make ourselves acquainted with the state of public business, and of enabling us to mature the measures we desire to submit to the House. I feel confident the House will give us that fair opportunity which is always afforded to gentlemen in our position for not only bringing before the House their business at the earliest possible moment, but bringing it before the House in such a way as will really tend to the despatch of business. If the Government are not allowed that opportunity—if it should be proposed that we should go on with the business at once—it will be obvious to any gentleman of experience that an investigation of the business of the country, and a consideration of the measures we wish to bring before it, must be considerably delayed. We believe we shall be consulting the due despatch of public business, and also really consulting the convenience of honorable members themselves, by proposing that the House should adjourn until Tuesday next. I therefore beg to move, That this House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I think that the honorable gentleman is asking more at the present moment than he ought to expect this House to grant. He has been in Wellington for a very considerable time; he has had an opportunity of consulting those gentlemen with whom he is about to act; and I think that, considering the state of public business, and the natural desire of honorable members to go home and attend to their usual avocations, it is not too much to expect the honorable gentleman to be able to state upon Friday next the course he intends to pursue.

I would therefore submit to him that this House should not adjourn longer than till Friday; and upon that day, if he shows cause why this House should adjourn until Tuesday, I have no doubt the usual courtesy will be extended to Ministers; but I think he will have to show a great deal better reason than he has shown to-day. I am not going to move an amendment, but I would submit to the honorable member for his consideration that it would be better not to stop the public business for a week, but that we should meet on Friday, when he can make a further statement. I submit that his present statement is not sufficient to justify us, in the present state of public business, and at this advanced season of the year, in adjourning until Tuesday. I make these remarks in all fairness, and with every desire that the new Ministry should be able to take that position in the House which the House wishes to grant them.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I agree entirely with what has fallen from the honorable member for Akaroa. I think that, at this period of the year, we should get through business as speedily as possible. I would have no objection to adjourn from day to day, and to give as much time as reason requires to the honorable gentlemen opposite. I may say that, whenever the Ministry have taken their oaths, and are installed on these benches, I shall give notice of a very important motion. I am anxious to get that motion on the Order Paper as soon as I can. Perhaps it may seem somewhat anomalous for me to indicate anything of this kind from this bench, but in point of fact I am doing so as a private member. We have been relegated to the position of private members, and it is only through an accident that we are here now. I hope the honorable member will agree to adjourn until Friday, and, if there be any necessity for a further adjournment, I am sure the House will not oppose it. I hope the honorable member will accede to this. If the honorable gentleman does not see his way to accede to my proposition, I shall move it by way of amendment, although I would rather not do so.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I must say I think the action of honorable gentlemen on the opposite side is not at all fair to the House as a whole. In the first place, I entirely disagree with those honorable gentlemen that it is either fair or reasonable to honorable gentlemen in the position of the honorable member for Selwyn and those associated with him to demand that the House shall meet on Friday, and that they shall then show good cause to adjourn until Tuesday. There cannot be too much reasonable consideration throughout the whole House given to honorable gentlemen placed in their position. No ground whatever has been shown by the honorable member for Akaroa for the action he has taken. All he told us was, that the honorable member for Selwyn had been a long time in Wellington, and had had plenty of time to consult with other honorable gentlemen, and arrange—what? Why, to arrange the basis on which the new Government are to meet this House under, perhaps, the most extraordinary circumstances that have ever

occurred in the history of the colony. As a matter of fact, my honorable friend has only been a fortnight in Wellington, and during the whole time has been obliged to sit in the House and watch the course of the debate. I ask if this is the proper course for a reasonable member to take. I must say I was very much surprised at my honorable friend the member for Akaroa—who hitherto has had the character of a fair and reasonable man—being the member who comes forward and proposes one of the most unreasonable steps I have ever heard proposed in the House. Why should the proposition of the honorable member for Selwyn and those acting with him be questioned, when they ask for a few days to enable them to meet the House again, with their business in such a form that it can be placed at once before the House? We shall only lose time by meeting again on Friday. Another point I would press is this: that, if we adjourn until Tuesday, many of us will be able to go home and attend to pressing affairs of our own; whereas, if we meet again on Friday, it simply means that we are to hang about here for four or five days, when we have really nothing to do. If it is understood throughout the House that the ordinary constitutional and reasonable course is to be adopted, of giving the new Government time to make arrangements for the proper despatch of public business, we had better adjourn at once until Tuesday. If we only adjourn until Friday, and then adjourn again until Tuesday, we shall be doing something quite different from what has hitherto been done. I have seen seven or eight new Ministries take office, but I never on a single occasion knew objection to be made to allowing them to have time to make their arrangements. When the honorable gentleman at the head of the present Government took office there was no objection to his having time. The honorable gentleman asked for what time he pleased, and he got it. I do not remember any occasion on which a proposition by a new Ministry for time to arrange their plans before meeting the House was called in question. I am very much annoyed at the delay myself. I thought we should go on with the business as soon as possible: there is no one more anxious for that than myself. At the same time, I hold that, when an honorable gentleman in the position of the honorable member for Selwyn comes down to the House and indicates a day on which he will be prepared absolutely to go on with business, the House should not throw obstacles in his way, but ought at once to accede to his wish with that courtesy and consideration always extended to honorable gentlemen in his position.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—To save time, I will at once move, as an amendment, That this House, at its rising, do adjourn until Friday next. I think there should be fair-play always; and, when those honorable gentlemen have taken their seats on these benches, I have no doubt the House will agree to give them what time they require. To save time, I propose that we should divide at once on the question.

Mr. READER WOOD.—I beg to second the amendment. The honorable member for GERALD

dine has pleaded, with his usual eloquence, in favour of the Ministry; but, if honorable members look back they will find that the practice has always been that the new Ministry should take an early opportunity of taking their seats on these benches, and of stating to the House in brief what their policy is to be, and should then ask for two or three days more before they commence the actual business of the country. What do those honorable gentlemen propose to do? Nothing of the sort. They have not made their appearance upon these benches yet. We have not yet had the pleasure of seeing them sit alongside one another. We have not heard a single word from their lips generally outlining the policy which they propose to pursue. Yet they ask now for a week's delay, for no purpose whatever, so far as I can see. They must be prepared, or ought to be prepared, by Friday to give an outline of the policy they will pursue, and of the general character of the Bills they propose to bring down. Then I am sure the House, if there is any reason for it, will be prepared to concede to them, as it always has done on similar occasions, a still further delay. But I must say I am surprised beyond measure at the course the gentlemen who are to occupy these benches are now taking, when my honorable friend the member for Port Chalmers has stated that he is anxious to have an opportunity of making a motion of a very particular kind. When honorable gentlemen heard that announcement they should, without losing a single moment, have offered to take their places to-morrow, to enable my honorable friend to give that notice of motion. It seems to me that they are endeavouring to evade the question—endeavouring to gain time, for purposes best known to themselves. I must say that I do not think the course they purpose to adopt under such circumstances is one which the general feeling of this House will sympathize with.

Mr. BRANDON.—It appears to me that the course pursued by the honorable gentlemen who may now be called the Opposition is a peculiar one. They talk of delaying the business of the country! I think the honorable gentlemen themselves may well be charged with delaying the business of the country. When last session they were defeated on an adverse motion, instead of at once retiring from those benches, they appealed to the country, and put the country to a very great expense, besides delaying the course of legislation. I think the position they have now taken up shows a spirit of factious opposition on their part.

Mr. HALL.—Before the motion is put, I wish to be allowed to say a few words. The honorable member for Waitemata has said that he is exceedingly astonished at the line that we have adopted, after the notice of motion given by the honorable member for Port Chalmers. I am exceedingly surprised at the honorable gentleman, who has had some experience of parliamentary business, having—I do not use the word offensively—the “assurance” to lay down such a doctrine as that. What has the honorable gentleman asked us to believe? That it is right and proper that a motion of want of confidence in a Government who have not yet taken

their seats on those benches, should be tabled and should be considered before they have had a fair and reasonable opportunity of putting before the country the policy by which they ask to be judged. Those honorable gentlemen have said that we do not wish really to bring forward any Liberal policy—that if we were in office we never should do so. They are now proposing to do what?—to deny us the opportunity of proposing such a policy. The honorable gentleman, with his experience of the difficulty of the duty of a new Government placing before the House the real state of the business—of the difficult duty it is to prepare a policy, and to come down with the details to give effect to it—says, in his wisdom, that that can be done in twenty-four hours. What a miserable mockery of a policy that must be that can be matured in twenty-four hours! We do not wish to evade the question; we wish to meet it fully, fairly, and as promptly as possible, and that it may be fairly tried. The country will have it fairly tried. The honorable gentlemen opposite are doing themselves the greatest possible harm by adopting their present course. The answer they submit to the country indicates a most evident desire that this question shall not be fairly tried. The honorable member for Akaroa has stated that it is very desirable that no loss of time should take place—that honorable members are here at considerable inconvenience. I think the honorable gentleman ought to have been kind enough to make that suggestion to the honorable members on the Government benches after the late division. If those honorable gentlemen had adopted the usual course, instead of trying how they could possibly evade the consequences of that vote, what would they have done? Would they not have tendered their resignations to His Excellency the next morning—on Saturday morning?—(No, no.)—That would have been the constitutional course to pursue. They tried by all kinds of shifts how they could possibly evade the effect of that vote; but they have utterly and entirely failed—they are at last obliged to submit. Now, when they have taken three days to make up their minds whether they would resign or not, they give us twenty-four hours to bring down a policy. The honorable gentlemen are only playing into our hands; they are playing our game. They are not ashamed of such a proceeding; but I know their constituencies will be. Honorable members opposite propose to divide on this matter. They know very well that a great many honorable members have gone away, not expecting that this question would come on. I appeal, irrespective of party, to those independent members who wish to see fair-play. I believe there are many honorable members on that side of the House who are not bound by party ties, who will rise superior to them on an occasion of this kind, who will see fair-play, and who will give us a fair opportunity—that opportunity which we upon our responsibility ask for—that delay which we declare to be absolutely necessary to enable us to bring down a statement of policy. They will not deny that to us: I shall be very much disappointed if they do. For these reasons, I trust the honorable gentleman who moved the

amendment will not decide to press it. I say that it is impossible for us, who have not yet been inside the offices—actually impossible for us, to come down on Friday next with a full statement of policy.

Hon. MEMBERS.—An outline.

Mr. HALL.—You gain nothing by an outline. We do not want to give an outline; we want to give you a full statement. In order to enable us to make that full statement at the earliest possible moment, you should not ask us to meet the House on Friday to go on with the business, but should give us time to enable us to prepare that statement. I trust very sincerely that the honorable gentleman will not press his amendment. I could quote precedents from the Imperial Parliament to show that a proceeding of the kind is entirely unconstitutional; but I do not wish to weary the House. I would rather appeal to the feelings and sense of fair-play of honorable gentlemen.

Mr. MOSS.—I heard with astonishment what fell from the honorable gentleman who we must suppose is now at the head of the Government. Until this moment, it was distinctly understood that the new Government would carry out the policy of the late Government. Now, for the first time, we hear that they are going to propound a new policy. To my mind this quite alters the whole position, and it might have influenced the last vote, which enabled a new Government to come into office. The members of the new Government are not yet sworn in. What is the cause of the unusual delay? We shall very soon find that the members of the House will be very anxious to go home. If we do not take care—if we allow too much delay—we shall lose the passage of those Bills on which we have set our hearts—those measures which the honorable member for Kaipoi urged the House the other day to “cart” out of the way. We want to see them “carted” out of the way. The honorable member for Selwyn has a policy all ready to his hand. The amendment to the Address in Reply declared that it was their intention to carry out the policy of their predecessors, if they succeeded in getting into office. They have got into office, and I do not see any reason why they should not be in a position, in one or two days, to bring down these Bills for consideration. Honorable gentlemen will have plenty of time to consider any other points of their policy when these Bills are passed. I therefore hope the honorable member will agree to the suggestion made by the honorable member for Port Chalmers, and not ask for an adjournment beyond Friday.

Mr. MOORHOUSE.—I had no intention of saying a word on this question, because it is as plain as possible that we ought to accede to the motion of the honorable member for Selwyn. We should remember that we are talking, not only to this Assembly, but to the gallery; and what would a discerning public think of a number of gentlemen who had the effrontery to come forward as candidates for the position of administrators of the affairs of the colony, if they came down and said four-and-twenty hours were suffi-

cient to go through the offices in that enormous building on the beach? I am not prepared to have confidence in an Administration that can pretend to present a policy complete in all its details in twenty-four hours. The party to which I have for some time belonged have had no opportunity for the last two years to make an examination of the affairs in that building; and I think it is monstrous, in the face of the public, to expect the successors of the late Government to come down in twenty-four hours, without that diligent preparation which the country has a right to expect, and to state that they properly understand the affairs of the colony. I am sure the public would have a very small opinion of my honorable friends if they came down professing that they were able to understand the real state of affairs in twenty-four hours. A week is not sufficient to go through all the business. I have a very small opinion of honorable gentlemen who say that the affairs of the country can be properly reviewed, with all necessary appliances, in twenty-four hours. I say that Ministers would require to go down to those buildings and work most conscientiously for a solid week at least, before they could get a fair grasp of the condition of the country. I am not explaining my intention as to which party I shall support—I am speaking now as an independent member—I am thoroughly and most completely independent. The public creditor and the public generally would be very much dissatisfied with an Administration that would come down in twenty-four hours and pretend to make an exposition of the condition of the country. On the other hand, I think my friends on both sides of the House will say that I am justified in thinking that the country should be saved from the discredit that would follow the advent of a policy propounded, by whatever party, after an examination of the affairs of the colony extending only over twenty-four hours. I trust we shall not object to give the honorable gentlemen, who have undertaken to govern the country under circumstances of very great disadvantage to themselves, sufficient time to make a proper statement of the affairs of the country, and to prepare for the discharge of the serious duties that will devolve upon them.

Mr. MURRAY.—On the present occasion we are here as a jury to judge between two parties, and to determine which is right. The House, by a small majority, agreed with the amendment brought forward by the honorable member for Selwyn, which declared that the late Ministry did not possess the confidence of this House. We have not given the new Ministry an opportunity of stating why they should claim the support of the House, or of showing whether the change of the Administration was justified or not. Before those honorable gentlemen have actually taken their position upon the Ministerial benches, we are asked to agree to that which I consider is not a creditable proceeding—we are asked to censure them before they have put their policy before the House. I ask, as a question of fairness—that fairness which has always been the characteristic of Englishmen—is it right to judge men before you have given them an opportunity of stating

their case, and to condemn them unheard? Such a course may be justifiable on the grounds of party tactics, but it is not justifiable on the grounds of fairness and justice. We have heard these gentlemen charged with having brought the no-confidence motion before the House from a desire to obtain office. The honorable gentlemen now on the Government benches will not allow them to take their places, but bring down a vote of want of confidence in them before they have assumed the duties of Ministers of the Crown, and that would appear to indicate a hunger after office on the part of those gentlemen who at present occupy the Ministerial benches, but who have ceased to be Her Majesty's Ministers. The country will have its eyes upon us at the present time. The people are there to judge us, and we are here to judge Ministers. Let the country not say that it is a fear of exposure that prevents those honorable gentlemen from giving their opponents due opportunity of examining into the affairs of the country. As to the question of policy, it is not merely the Liberal principles upon which most of the members of the House are agreed, but there are other important matters. We have got the Native policy to decide upon. There are very wide differences of opinion on that point, and I should be glad to hear a statement from the incoming Ministry of how they propose to meet the Native difficulty at present existing in New Zealand. We have had no statement of finance put before us. The country is absolutely ignorant of the state of our financial affairs, and yet Ministers are asked to state their policy on that important question without having had an opportunity of consulting public documents and ransacking that large building on the beach. We are told that it is with a view of furthering business that we are asked to meet again on Friday. I hold that such will not be the effect, and that business will really be expedited if we adjourn until Tuesday and allow the incoming Ministry to prepare their policy and place it before the House. Ever since I have been a member of this House it has always been customary, when Ministers, under circumstances such as the present, have asked for a certain delay, to grant their request at once; and I appeal to those honorable gentlemen who are supporting the amendment not to persist in a course which will expose both their policy and their practice to very grave misconstruction in the eyes of the public. I entreat the honorable member for Port Chalmers not to raise any trifling side-issue on a great question of public policy. As for the inconvenience of waiting for a day or two, I would wait a month rather than see any unfairness towards either side of the House.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS.—I wish very much that the honorable member for Selwyn would agree to the adjournment until Friday, because I am sure that the members of this House, as well as the people outside, are very anxious that the public business should be proceeded with. We have had a continuous party struggle up to the present moment, and the year is already getting old before we have proceeded to investigate

and to take action towards carrying on the business of the country. I think that, if we adjourn until Friday, although we may possibly not be able to receive any statement of public policy from the incoming Ministers on that day, yet there is a certain amount of business which is not of a party character that may be taken without waiting for the statement of policy. I think the country is in an exceptional position, and I say, therefore, that I regret very much that exceptional haste has not been made on this occasion. Neither am I prepared to support the adjournment until Tuesday for the reason urged by many members—namely, that the gentlemen who are now coming into power should have until Tuesday to investigate fully into the conduct of their predecessors, with the view of raking up more charges against them than have been brought forward during the recent debate. I do not agree with that view at all. I most anxiously wish to proceed with the business of the country. We have already said that the honorable gentlemen who are still sitting on the Government benches do not possess our confidence; and, having said that, I do not wish that we should go any further, and I have no desire that public business should be delayed by any further effort to prove that they are incapable. But I agree that we should wait until Tuesday for the statement of policy from the incoming Ministry. If the honorable gentlemen who still occupy the Government benches say, as the honorable member for Port Chalmers said, that they are coming down with a vote of no-confidence forthwith, I shall be compelled to vote with my party and support the adjournment until Tuesday, because the question then becomes distinctly a party one. But I regret very much that the honorable member for Selwyn does not see his way to meet the House on Friday, and go on with some of the business of the country. I am quite sure that the country will cry out if we waste any more time in purely party struggles.

Mr. McLEAN.—I am very much surprised at the want of courtesy shown by the other side of the House in refusing the adjournment until Tuesday. I do not think a case has ever occurred before where such a refusal has been given. It is very possible that the present course is being adopted because of the desire to take advantage of the absence of a number of members on this side of the House; but it goes far to satisfy me that there is a great deal in what we have heard about these terrible scandals in connection with the Government offices—scandals about vouchers not being passed by the Audit; and it is important that the Government which is about to take office should have an opportunity of investigating these matters, and of coming down to the House with a statement which will allay the rumours, or establish their truth. This, Sir, is a serious matter, in my estimation, because I maintain that the incoming Government should adopt the words used by the Premier when he took office: "Off these benches we shall not go until we have had a full investigation of all these scandals." That is what will have to be done. It is no use those honorable gentlemen trying to burke the thing, and to get their friends in power,

Mr. Murray

and to cover up those matters. I am utterly astonished that honorable members from whom one would expect fair-play should back up those honorable gentlemen in the course they propose to take. It is all the same to me what Government is in office—so long as I see honest men in power, I will support them, and I say that we are putting a number of men in power at the present moment whose honesty is above suspicion. They are men whom this country can trust; and, on the other hand, New Zealand is ringing from end to end with scandals connected with those honorable gentlemen who are now leaving the Government benches. I dare those honorable gentlemen to say that these scandals shall not be investigated—that honorable gentlemen are to sit there quietly, and not allow us to inquire into them.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Name.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honorable gentleman will get "name" quickly enough; I am not going to refer to any particular parties. There are different matters, and I will not single out one Minister. Those honorable gentlemen know that these scandals are flying about the country, and they ought to be the first to demand from this House a Committee to investigate them. What are they doing? They are adopting a course which is without precedent in parliamentary history, and are denying the incoming Government a fair trial. I do not believe yet that this House will deny those honorable gentlemen a fair trial and an opportunity of investigating these scandals we hear of. So far as the adjournment is concerned, I care little myself whether it is until Friday or Tuesday. If Friday is fixed, a further adjournment can take place until Tuesday, if necessary. Of course, if the matter is pressed to a division, I shall vote for the adjournment until Tuesday.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—There are some gentlemen in this House who can never say anything, or do anything, or propose anything that would surprise me. But there is one gentleman who has spoken from the Ministerial side whom I did not expect to hear speak in the manner he has done. I once worked with him in this House. I thought, then, that he was a man who would never propose anything unreasonable; and I was very much surprised indeed this afternoon to find that even the contiguity of those benches had so far demoralized him that he could stand up in this House and support a proceeding of this kind, and that he could support it by statements that were not accurate. Sir, the honorable member for Waitemata has told us that we propose to take a week's time. Now, the honorable gentleman must know that we only propose to take two days—that we only propose to miss two days of the sitting-time of the House; and I would ask him whether, in the whole course of his long parliamentary knowledge, he ever knew of a new Ministry, on coming into office, asking for so little time before meeting the House with a statement of their measures. At the same time, I would ask him if, in the course of his long parliamentary experience, he ever knew a Prime Minister who took three whole days before he could inform the Governor

of his intention in consequence of a vote of want of confidence from this House. If the honorable members on the Ministerial benches were so exceedingly anxious to save the time of the House, it seems to me a very extraordinary proceeding that they should take a longer time before they tendered their resignations than was ever known to be taken before by any Ministry in this colony, or, I believe, in any other colony. We were told by the honorable member for Parnell that we were expected to adopt the same policy as the late Government; and that therefore no time ought to be taken before the gentlemen who are to succeed the honorable members on the Ministerial benches should be prepared with their measures and their policy. I think that, whatever may have been said with regard to adopting the same policy, nothing was ever said that gave the slightest indication that it was the intention of this side of the House to adopt the miserable, ill-considered measures which we have had thrown down from time to time on the table of the House by those gentlemen who have spent all their time travelling about the country in various ways, and have paid no attention whatever to the preparation of measures to be laid before Parliament. We were told once, Sir, that a certain gentleman could go outside this House and in the course of half an hour could prepare a measure that would reduce the expenses of the country by £100,000; but that half hour has never been completed yet—that £100,000 has never been taken off the expenses of this colony; and I am afraid any precipitation on the part of honorable members on this side of the House might possibly lead to results of a similar character. I think there is a very great difference between the measures that have been thrown down before this House occasionally and real liberal measures. I pointed out the other night that I did not look upon the last Electoral Bill as a liberal measure at all. It was a most illiberal measure, and one that would put the electors of this colony to inconveniences in order to obtain the right to vote to which they were never subjected before. I think it would be most unreasonable to expect that a Ministry which has not yet entered the Government offices should come down prepared to carry on the public business with only one day's remission from the ordinary sittings of the House. No person is more anxious than I am that the time of the House should not be wasted; but this proposal is simply a proposal to obstruct business. The only effect of compelling the Government to take up their positions in this House on Friday next would be to delay the business of the country and force the Government to take a longer time to prepare their measures than they otherwise would do.

Mr. HISLOP.—The honorable gentleman is rather unfortunate in the instances he has given in support of the rôle he has taken up. Ever since he saw fit to desert the party that brought him into this House a year ago, he has assumed the rôle of the moral and constitutional lecturer; but every one of the statements he made just now proves his complete unfitness for the position, for all of them were quite inaccurate. Every one who

was in the House when the speech relative to the £100,000 and the half-hour was delivered knows perfectly well that the honorable gentleman's version of that matter is not correct; nor has he correctly stated the facts connected with the motion for the adjournment. He said the members on his side of the House only asked for two days. What they ask for is a week. The honorable gentleman who is to be at the head of the Government stated yesterday that when the House met to-day he would ask for an adjournment till Thursday, and at that time it was evidently his intention only to ask for an adjournment until that day. Probably he has found that there are so many aspirants for the offices to be filled that it is necessary to devote his undivided attention to that matter; but what is it that this side of the House asks for? We ask the other side to come down on Friday and state whether they are prepared to go on with the government of the country. If they then say that they are not prepared to do so, we will grant them further time. Nothing could be more reasonable than that. The honorable member for Cheviot told us that no Ministry had asked for less time to prepare to meet the House than that asked for by the honorable member for Selwyn. He surely does not forget that when the present Ministry came into office they only asked for two days' delay; and the House is now prepared to grant the same consideration to the honorable member for Selwyn. Really, I hope the independent members of the House will not submit to be bullied by threats as to what the constituencies may say. For the last month we have been doing nothing but considering what the policy should be, and, if honorable members on the other side desire to alter the policy of the present Ministry, they have had ample time during the last fortnight to compare notes and see whether they are in accord with the policy which the country wishes to see undertaken. If they are in accord, I do not see why it should take more than the historical half-hour to come down and make a statement to the House. We do not want a Financial Statement, a Public Works Statement, or a Native Affairs Statement. I do not suppose the honorable gentleman intends to give us one or the other; but he should surely be able to do what the Premier did. He came down in a day and stated what the leading features of his policy would be; and, if the honorable gentleman will do that, he will satisfy the House.

Mr. BOWEN.—It is intensely amusing to hear it stated that an old campaigner like the honorable member for Cheviot was brought out by the honorable member for Waitaki and his friends. Why, Sir, the honorable member for Cheviot was an experienced politician when the honorable member for Waitaki was playing marbles. However, the honorable gentlemen is quite able to take care of himself. I should advise my friend the member for Selwyn to accept the proposal of the honorable gentlemen opposite, because it is evident that they have counted noses. They know that four or five members who always vote on this side of the House have gone away, not expecting that such discourteous obstruction

Mr. Hislop

would be attempted by the other side. Those gentlemen expected that the ordinary rules of courtesy and the ordinary rules of political warfare would be observed; but it is very evident, from the shouts of delight and derision which followed the proposal of the amendment, that the gentlemen who now constitute the Opposition have determined to take advantage of the absence of the members I have referred to, and to refuse the ordinary and constitutional courtesy usually granted to a new Government. I think it would be very unadvisable to take a division on a matter like this, and give the honorable gentlemen opposite the little crow they seem so anxious to obtain. It is far better that the responsibility of obstructing the business in this unprecedented way should rest with them.

Mr. W. J. HURST.—I hope the honorable member for Selwyn will accept the amendment. One or two observations made during the present discussion convinced me that the recent vote of the House was taken upon a wrong issue. It seems now that we are engaged in deciding questions not of measures, but of men. The addition to the Address in Reply was framed with a view to detract votes from this side of the House; but now we see clearly that the simple question is, Who are to occupy those benches? The honorable member for Cheviot says that the delay was occasioned by the honorable member at the head of the Government taking so long to send in his resignation. I utterly deny that. Upon a plain vote of want of confidence those honorable gentlemen would have tendered their resignations at once; but the resolution merely stated that the House had no confidence in the Government as "at present constituted," which, in my opinion, clearly indicated that the House did not condemn all the gentlemen on the Ministerial benches, and that it was in favour of some of those gentlemen continuing in that position. The particular facts of the case should be considered. Those honorable gentlemen who are anxious to get on to those benches ask for a reasonable delay, I admit; but why do the opposite side refuse, and ask them to come down to the House on Friday? Merely because they wish to give notice of a particular motion on that occasion. The present Minister for Public Works told the House this afternoon that he wished to give notice of motion on that day; and why should that opportunity not be given? I should be sorry to vote with the side to which I belong if the only object were to carry out the miserable device referred to by the honorable member for Kaipoi. I have no desire to take advantage of the absence of any honorable members. If I thought that was the object of the amendment, I should go into the opposite lobby without hesitation.

Mr. SUTTON.—I think the adjournment asked for by the honorable member for Selwyn is a very reasonable one: indeed, I do not agree with those honorable gentlemen who say that it is an unusually long one. So far as I have been able to learn, it is a much shorter adjournment than usual on such occasions. I would call the attention of the honorable member for Waitaki to the fact that the adjournment now asked for is an

adjournment of exactly the same length as was granted to the honorable member (Sir George Grey) when he took these benches. The Government of which Major Atkinson was Premier resigned on the second Monday in October, 1877, and the first occasion on which the late Ministry met the House was on the next Tuesday week. The day and date are exactly analogous, and it was admitted on all sides that if Ministers had asked for a longer adjournment there would have been no time lost. We are all anxious to get on with the business, and I believe that the adjournment asked for by the honorable member for Selwyn would facilitate business.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I think that after some remarks which have been made I owe an explanation to the House on a certain point. I shall not remark upon what I call the very unpleasant observations which have been made about myself and my colleagues. I shall content myself with quoting from an old poem,—

An auld Scotch scold laid hands on me;
"Stop on your way, base man," said she;
"Answer all scandals of the town
Answer the stories ganging roun'."

A constitutional question has been raised as to the day on which I tendered my resignation to His Excellency. Now, it will be in the knowledge of every member of the House that on Friday a vote of want of confidence was carried against the Government. It was one of want of confidence in the Government as at present constituted. These words clearly implied a reconstruction of the Government. The House does not meet on Saturday; the House cannot meet on Sunday; it does not meet on Monday; it meets on Tuesday. The Speaker gave notice that upon Tuesday the Address to the Governor containing that amendment was to be presented to His Excellency. Now, the constitutional rule is, that the Governor sends no message to this House that is not advised by somebody, and the constitutional rule, I believe, was that the Ministry who were in office when that vote was passed should have advised the Governor in his reply, and that in giving his reply he should state the course he intended to pursue to give effect to the Address in Reply. I have no doubt that was the constitutional rule. On Saturday the question arose whether the House really did mean a reconstruction of the Government. I believe the House did. I believe that was the intention. I believe that was certainly the intention of a good number of honorable gentlemen on the opposite side. I believe their intention was that I, amongst others, should leave the Government—that if I and others were out of the Government a Ministry could be formed which would be acceptable to the House. On Monday morning I waited on the Governor, and I informed the Governor that myself and my colleagues did, in point of fact, resign; but, as I thought, the proper constitutional course would be that our resignations should be announced at the time the reply to the Address was given, and I supposed that under those circumstances we should have been asked to advise as to the nature of the reply, and that the Governor would not send any message

to this House that was not advised by some member of his Executive. His Excellency differed in opinion from me. Our resignations were therefore made absolute from Monday. The House ceased to have any Ministry after Monday virtually. I am here to-day, not at my own choice, but to oblige the honorable gentlemen opposite. I was informed by the Governor last night that they were to be sworn in at twelve to-day. That hour was fixed by the Governor. Why they did not carry out the promise they made to the Governor to take office at twelve to-day I have not been informed. I am not here at my own will. I feel some indignation at being kept here so long; but, believing it to be for the public benefit that I should submit to the indignity, that consideration makes me occupy this place now. I consider that the honorable gentleman opposite was, according to all constitutional usage, bound to have taken the vote of confidence as it was actually passed—that is, to have seen that it implied a reconstruction; and, if he could not accomplish that reconstruction, I think it was his duty to have gone back to the Governor and told him so, and to have resigned the task he had undertaken, and so allowed some other person to undertake a reconstruction of the Ministry. I think, then, that the wish of the House might have been given effect to, and that the task of reconstruction might have been satisfactorily accomplished. I conceive that that error has not only been committed by the honorable gentlemen opposite, but I think that no reply ought to have been given by the Governor to this House which had not been advised by some responsible Minister, a member either of this House or of the other Chamber. I am confident that I acted according to strict constitutional usage. For myself, it must have been a matter of absolute indifference whether I was in office on Saturday or Monday; it is absurd to think that the holding of office for a day or two longer could have entered into any sensible man's mind. I endeavoured to act in accordance with the rules of the Constitution. I believe that I perfectly achieved that end as far as depended on myself; but, I contend, it was the honorable member opposite and another person really who have not acted in accordance with the Constitution. I think that the advice I tendered—namely, that my resignation should be formally accepted on the day the Address was presented—was the correct rule to be observed; and I further think, Sir, that at all events the custom of the Constitution is this—it certainly has been the practice in this country—that I should have been asked to advise who should be sent for when I resigned my office. That, Sir, was not done. If I had been asked, I should have given such advice as would have enabled the wishes of this House to be carried out. I could have named a gentleman who would have succeeded in reconstructing a Ministry which would have been entirely acceptable to the House. I think, therefore, that, instead of my being the person to blame in this transaction, I have done my duty, and that the honorable gentleman opposite has not done his duty. I think, virtually, he has no right to sit on these benches, not having given effect to the will of the

Mr. SUTTON.—Will the honorable gentleman state the date on which the Atkinson Ministry resigned?

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—That has nothing to do with the question. Mr. Larnach had taken a week to form a Ministry; but now the honorable member for Selwyn tells us that yesterday—Tuesday—he informed His Excellency that he had formed a Ministry, and he asks for a whole week from that before he gives us a statement of his policy. Sir George Grey was sworn in on Saturday, and made a statement on Monday: so that he had only one day, and that day a Sunday, to prepare it.

Amendment agreed to.

The House adjourned at half-past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 10th October, 1879.

First Readings—Want of Confidence—Public Revenues Bill—Administration of Justice—Wakatipu Agricultural Land—Renwick Town Telegraph Station—Native Reserves on the West Coast—Railway Tickets and Officials—Thorburn—Otago—Telegraph—River-ton—Invercargill Railway—Land-Tax Department—Land-Tax—Ministerial Statement—Triennial Parliaments Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Mines Bill, Mining Companies Bill, Oamaru Harbour Board Bill, Waitara Harbour Board Land Grant and Loan Bill, Masterton and Greytown Lands Management Bill, Real Estate Bill, Hawke's Bay and Marlborough Rivers Bill.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Sir, I beg to give notice that on next sitting-day I shall move, That the Government does not possess the confidence of this House. Perhaps the House will allow me to say one or two words in connection with this announcement, with the view of expediting the public business.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the explanation is objected to I cannot allow the honorable member to proceed with making any remarks upon giving a notice of motion.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Then I will move, That the House do now adjourn. I merely wish to state that I take it for granted that the usual constitutional course will be adopted on this occasion, and that the Government will not go on with the public business until this motion is disposed of. I wish to say, on behalf of the Opposition, that we are exceedingly desirous to go on with the business of the country, and anxious to bring this question to an issue as speedily as possible. If the Government do not object, we will go to a division upon it to-day, and will abide loyally by the result, whatever it

Mr. De Lautoir

may be. For my part, I have no doubt as to what the result will be: at the same time, we know that—

The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley.

In the event of this motion being adverse, speaking on behalf of this side of the House, I can assure you we will accept the decision loyally, and do all we can to expedite the public business and get the many important measures now before us on the Statute Book. It appears too much to expect that the Government will go on with this motion to-day, but, if I receive an assurance from them that they will make it the first Order next week, I shall be satisfied. I may add that, if the House decides to go on with the motion to-day and bring it to a conclusion to-night, there is reason to believe we shall be able to come down on Tuesday with a Government which will possess the confidence of the House, and which will be fully prepared to go on with the business of the country without delay.

PUBLIC REVENUES BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—I beg to give notice that, on next sitting-day, I will move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend "The Public Revenues Act, 1878." With the permission of the House, I may perhaps be permitted to say that the state of the finances is most unsatisfactory. I am in this position: that I shall have to ask the House, on next sitting-day, to suspend the Standing Orders, to enable me to carry this Bill through all its stages in one sitting, in order to meet the public payments; or else these payments will have to cease from the Treasury on Wednesday, the 15th instant. I will not on this occasion enter into a statement of the position of the finances, but I will do so on an early day, when I will place before the House the exact state of affairs.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

Mr. FINN asked the Government, without notice, What action they intended to take in reference to late proceedings at Gisborne? No doubt all honorable members had read or heard of what had occurred there, and he thought it was time some action was taken for the proper administration of justice.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that at the present time there was no officer appointed for the Gisborne District, and the duties had been discharged by the officer of another district. The attention of the Government had been called to the question raised by the honorable gentleman, and they had taken steps at once to send an experienced officer to that district.

WAKATIPU AGRICULTURAL LAND.

Mr. FINN asked the Government, When they intended to throw open for settlement all available agricultural land at the head of Lake Wakatipu, Otago?

Mr. ROLLESTON sympathized generally with the honorable gentleman's question, and the Government were anxious to afford increased facilities for settlement and for placing people on the land. They had now under consideration a proposal to

that effect, which would be submitted to the House. With regard to this special case, he would avail himself of any information at the disposal of the honorable member, and he would be able to give him a definite reply at a later date.

RENWICK TOWN TELEGRAPH STATION.

Mr. SEYMOUR asked the Postmaster-General, If he will cause a telegraph station to be opened at Renwick Town, without insisting upon a large money guarantee?

Mr. HALL replied that the Government proposed to run a short line from Blenheim to Renwick Town on receiving a guarantee of £60 a year, and a free site of half an acre of land for a telegraph station.

NATIVE RESERVES ON THE WEST COAST.

Mr. TAINUI asked the Government, When they intend laying before this House the report of Mr. Commissioner Young on Native reserves on the West Coast, together with all correspondence and minutes relating thereto?

Mr. BRYCE replied that the papers to which the honorable gentleman referred were being copied, and would be placed on the table of the House in a few days. He might state that they were voluminous, or they would have already been laid on the table.

RAILWAY TICKETS AND OFFICIALS.

Mr. ANDREWS asked the Minister for Public Works,—(1.) If he will cause all railway passenger tickets for use on the New Zealand Railways to have the amount or value of such tickets printed on the back thereof? (2.) If it is the intention of the Government to take any steps to cause the whole of the officials on the Government railways to wear a distinctive dress or uniform while on duty?

Mr. OLIVER said that, with regard to the first portion of the honorable gentleman's question, the matter had been referred to the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island. Up to this date no answer had been received. He hoped he would be able to give the honorable gentleman further information on the subject in a few days. With regard to the second part of the question, he might state that the officials on most of the lines of railway in the Middle Island were already furnished with a uniform or a distinctive badge. As to the adoption of the same system on the railways in the Northern Island, the matter was under the consideration of the Commissioner of Railways.

THORNBURY-OTAUTAU TELEGRAPH.

Mr. H. HIRST asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, If any steps have been taken to erect a line of telegraph from the Thornbury Junction to Otautau, in the County of Wallace?

Mr. HALL said the Government intended to erect a telegraph line from the Thornbury Junction to Otautau as soon as the railway line under construction would enable them to do so.

RIVERTON-INVERCARGILL RAILWAY.

Mr. H. HIRST asked the Minister for Public Works, If any steps have been taken to re-lay the Riverton-Invercargill Railway with 40 lb. rails, as recommended by the Engineer?

Mr. OLIVER replied that the line from Invercargill to Riverton was now being re-laid with superior rails.

LAND-TAX DEPARTMENT.

Mr. BOWEN asked the Government, Whether any instructions were sent by the Land-Tax Department to the Deputy-Commissioners as to the principle on which valuations should be made; and, if so, whether a copy of such instructions will be laid before this House?

Major ATKINSON begged to lay the instructions referred to on the table of the House.

LAND-TAX.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Government, If they will give instructions that the land-tax in each county may be paid at any Post Office Savings Bank within such county? He had been induced to put this question owing to representations made to him by settlers in the Manawatu District, who had pointed out the great disadvantage of not being allowed to pay the land-tax into the various Post Office Savings Banks within the county, instead of into only one of them, to make a payment into which some of the settlers had to travel a distance of over one hundred miles. There were five Post Office Savings Banks within the county, and if the Government would be willing to acquiesce in the desire expressed, and arrange for the payment of the tax at any one of these banks, it would be a great public convenience.

Major ATKINSON replied that the receivers at the principal Post Office Savings Banks had been instructed to receive the tax and to give receipts. He was unable as yet to say whether it was a wise or proper arrangement. It would be impossible to pay the tax at all the Post Office Savings Banks, as they had not been furnished with the forms of receipt. He understood that orders had already been given that any person could pay the land-tax by means of a post office order, so that practically he could pay the tax at any post office where money orders were issued. Money orders for that purpose would be issued free, so that the person paying the tax would not be put to any additional expense.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, before the House proceeds to the Orders of the day, I desire, with its permission, to make a brief statement. I may say that on Wednesday last I perhaps did not altogether do justice to the motives of the honorable gentlemen who objected to the adjournment of the House until Tuesday. However, reflection has satisfied me that the object of those honorable gentlemen was to expedite the public business which is before the House. Sir, we are exceedingly anxious to meet them in that object, and we are prepared to go on with the public business without delay and without interruption. I think that,

in justice to myself, I may be allowed also to say a word in explanation of the reason why Ministers were not sworn in before the sitting of the House on Wednesday last. It has been said that that was done in order to avoid an immediate notice of motion of want of confidence on the part of the honorable member for Port Chalmers. There is no foundation whatever for that statement. We had been made acquainted on Tuesday, by the late Government, that an imprest supply was required for the public service, to enable necessary payments to be made. We had agreed to co-operate in procuring that supply; but the late Government did not receive the necessary authority from His Excellency until after the sitting of the House on Tuesday. It was necessary, therefore, that the Bill should be passed on Wednesday. Now, as honorable members are aware, the gentleman who is to represent the Government in the Legislative Council has not arrived in Wellington; and we had intimation that the Legislative Council would object—and, I think, not improperly or unreasonably—to pass a money Bill without its being recommended by a Minister of the Crown. If honorable members have been good enough to follow me they will see that we had only this alternative: Either to postpone taking the place of the late Government until after Wednesday's sitting, or to allow payments which were essentially required for the public service to stand over until next week. That alternative was clearly before us. I communicated that fact to the honorable member for the Thames or for Christchurch—I do not know which he prefers to be called—and I think he must have temporarily forgotten it when he stated to the House that he was not aware why we had not been sworn in. I am obliged to the House for allowing me to make this statement, because the matter has been represented in a light unfavourable and unfair to the present Government. I now, Sir, respond to the desire of honorable members opposite to go on with the business of the country, by making a statement, as far as can be done at the present time, of the intentions of the Government. There are some subjects upon which obviously we cannot speak as yet, because our colleague, the Attorney-General, has not yet arrived in Wellington. It has been impossible for him to do so as yet; and honorable members, I am sure, will admit that it would be improper for us to commit the Government on subjects upon which we do not precisely know the sentiments of that honorable gentleman. With regard, also, to the question of finance, there is another reason. My honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer has been engaged most industriously in investigating the state of the finances ever since we were sworn in, and endeavouring to obtain such clear and correct information as will enable him to state to the House what our real financial position is. He has got thus far: that the financial position is one which requires—to put it mildly—the very serious consideration of the House. More than that he is not yet in a position to state; but either he or myself will, if not on Tuesday next, at any rate, I hope, on the following day, make a

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pretty full statement to the House of what the financial condition of the colony is. And we now say this: That it is desirable that the House and the country should know our financial position with the least possible delay. With regard to Native affairs, my honorable friend the Native Minister has been very actively engaged in obtaining authentic information upon the several important questions which have now to be dealt with. Owing to what I must call the peculiar manner in which the business of the Native Office has been conducted of late, it is not easy to obtain full and correct information without considerable labour, and without some time; therefore my honorable colleague has not placed me in a position at present to make any definite statement on this subject. But, Sir, on Tuesday next we shall be prepared to state generally what we believe to be the position of the difficulty on the West Coast, and generally what steps we think should be adopted. We shall also, if we have time, consider the large, important, and difficult question of the alienation of Native land, and be prepared, I hope, to give an outline of the views of the Government as to the manner in which that question should be dealt with. We shall also refer to a question which, we believe, should be brought fully under the notice of the House with very little delay indeed—the question of the character and the extent of the purchases of land from the Natives by the Government which are now going on. That is a matter which, we believe, requires the early and careful consideration of the House; but honorable members will admit that it is obvious we could not make a statement on that subject at the present moment. There are, however, questions upon which we are in a position to at once state what our intentions are, the main one being the large question of electoral reform. It has been the fashion for honorable members on the other side, and for their supporters outside the House, to throw doubts upon the sincerity of the members of this Government and of members supporting them—doubts as to the sincerity with which they advocate this large question of electoral reform. Sir, we propose to dispel at once and for ever all those doubts, by proceeding immediately with measures of electoral reform, and by pressing those measures on without any interruption. I hope and believe that honorable members on the opposite side will not allow any doubt as to their sincerity to be raised by their offering any obstruction to the rapid progress and completion of these important measures. The Franchise Bill—called the Electoral Bill, but which perhaps would be better defined if called a Bill to extend the franchise—has not been introduced to the House. It is, however, in type—it has been left by the late Government in type, although not complete. There are some printed slips attached containing proposals which are conflicting, and which no doubt the late Government had not time to quite make up their minds upon. I have given notice to-day for leave to introduce that Bill on Tuesday. At the present time I will only say that we do not altogether approve of the Bill introduced by the Government last

session. In many respects that Bill, as has been described by the honorable member for Cheviot, is not really a liberal measure—some of its provisions are illiberal. We propose rather to go back, and take generally as the basis of our Bill the measure which was passed through this House in 1878, but which was lost in consequence of a difference of opinion with the other branch of the Legislature. I say, “take that generally as the basis,” but we believe very valuable amendments and alterations may be introduced into that Bill from the one which was introduced by the Hon. Mr. Whitaker. We hope also to embody in this Bill a proposal with reference to the Maori qualification which will be admitted to be fair, reasonable, and satisfactory to both races. The next Bill to which I will refer is one that has already been read a first time in this House, and has been circulated to-day, and which I propose to move the second reading of forthwith. It is the Triennial Parliaments Bill. We believe this is a Bill which is desirable; but I will not go further into that subject now than to say this: The Bill which the late Government left behind them provides that the House of Representatives shall continue only for a period of three years. But there is this further remarkable feature about their proposal, which I think the House and the country ought to have its attention called to: that this Bill is only to take effect after the dissolution, or other termination, of the present General Assembly. That is the liberality of the late Government. We are to declare that the people shall have the benefit of triennial Parliaments, but carefully guard ourselves against any inconvenience. On this point the Government differ from their predecessors.

Mr. GISBORNE.—That was the Bill introduced last Parliament.

Mr. HALL.—I can only say that we sent to the Printing Office for the Bill which the Government had ready, and this is the Bill that was sent up to us.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I submit that the honorable gentleman is wrong in making statements reflecting upon members who do not happen to be on his side of the House. We are quite prepared to hear the intentions of the Government, but not statements introducing matters upon which there might be differences of opinion. I submit that as a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I did not consider that the Premier had in any way transgressed the rules of parliamentary debate in the observations he was addressing to the House.

Mr. HALL.—No one in the House is more anxious than I am to avoid anything which may give members a right to complain. I shall always be glad, if I offend unwittingly in that respect, to have my attention called to it. If I have offended on the present occasion it has been unwittingly. I wished to explain to the House what are the intentions of the present Government compared with those of our predecessors in respect to this Bill. The honorable member for Totara said that this was the Bill of last session. I wish to point out that the late Prime Minister moved for leave to introduce a Triennial Parliaments Bill;

the Bill was introduced, and was ordered to be printed; and when we sent to the Printing Office for the Bill this was the one we received.

Mr. GISBORNE.—The Bill had not been settled by the Government.

Mr. HALL.—Well, this is the Bill that we found. When the motion for the second reading is made, it will be competent for honorable members to afford any explanation they may choose. The present Government, at any rate, say they are ready to go on with the Triennial Parliaments Bill, and wish to do so to-day, without unnecessary delay. The third question is the readjustment of the representation. Of course, we entirely agree that readjustment is necessary; but it is a matter of considerable difficulty. We believe that population should be the first consideration, but it should not be the only consideration: and, therefore, we object to the plan laid down in the Bill introduced by the Government last session, by which representation was to be readjusted by a mechanical process, because that would prevent fair and legitimate consideration being given to those other elements in the matter of readjustment which ought to be considered. We propose, in the Bill which we shall endeavour to pass, to have it effected in such a way as will give to all portions of the colony the rights to which they may fairly lay claim, on the ground of population; but we do not approve of any scheme which should go the length of practically disfranchising some portions of the colony, as would have been done by the Bill brought in by the last Government. The only other subject on which I can now state the intentions of the Government is with reference to land legislation. We hold it to be a mistake to suppose that it is the interest of any class that the land should not be settled. We believe that it is indispensable to the progress and welfare of the colony, and that it is to the interest of all classes, that the land should be settled, and settled as speedily as possible. At any rate, if there is any class in the community which is opposed to the settlement of the land on liberal principles, with such a class we have no sympathy whatever. We believe that an improvement can be made in the present law upon this subject; but I must add that, in my opinion, justice has not been altogether done to our past land laws. If any one will examine the agricultural statistics, he will find that the settlement of land in New Zealand has taken place at a more rapid rate than in any other colony: still no doubt the experience of the past two years shows that further facilities are required. Especially with regard to deferred-payment land, the present law has imposed burdens which have proved onerous to an extent which never was intended by the House when it passed the Bill of 1877. The price has been found to be excessive; but this is not due to the provisions of the Land Act itself, but to those of the Land Sales Act passed in that session. At any rate, the question must be reconsidered, and we shall come down to the House with well-considered proposals on the subject. This is all that the Government is in a position to state at the present time. If the

to the other liberal measures which have been referred to. He says, "We will give them every consideration, and at the same time will put ourselves to great inconvenience to bring them down as quickly as possible." I consider this motion for adjournment is an exceedingly bad move, and I feel certain that an appeal to all persons of an independent spirit will be met with the reply that it was neither a fair nor a just thing not to afford the present Government the slightest chance to bring down the measures they ardently desire to bring forward. I will not believe that all the patriotism of the honorable member for the Thames, all the tact of the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan), or all the tact of the honorable member for Tuapeka can possibly keep a number of honorable gentlemen together to do their bidding in this fashion. I do not believe that those honorable gentlemen will allow themselves to be driven like a flock of sheep into any lobby. They are gentlemen of independent spirit, and will not be driven into any lobby of this House by others. I say that the sense of fairness with which I have already perceived this House to be largely imbued will induce those honorable gentlemen to give a decent length of time to the members of the present Government to bring down their measures and to mature their plans. I trust that in the course of my remarks I have said nothing to hurt the feelings of the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan). I would be the last to do so. I have known him for many years; he is a gentleman for whom I entertain the most profound respect; but I think he travelled just a little beyond the proper limits in the speech he made. I sincerely hope that, if we come to a division on this question of adjournment, those honorable gentlemen who have come here pledged to support this Bill will see their way not to be led into any lobby by any set of men who are endeavouring to place themselves on those benches, utterly regardless as to whether this and other liberal measures are carried or not.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I do not wish to be misunderstood as to the vote which I intend to give on this occasion. The question is not the second reading of this Bill, but whether the Premier will give an assurance that the notice of motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers will take precedence on Tuesday next. There should be no attempt made to shelve this matter by a side-issue. The honorable member for Waipa has stated, and wishes to make it appear, that the honorable member for the Thames and the members on this side of the House are now going to oppose these measures. It is a most unfair way to put the question. If the assurance is given that the motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers will take precedence on Tuesday next, we will let the second reading pass. Until such an assurance is given, I shall oppose the motion of the Premier.

Mr. McLEAN.—I think the honorable members of the Opposition have been put into a little corner. I will tell the House that, if the late Government had been on those benches, and had brought in this Bill, a certain number of their

supporters would have left them. They were warned in the lobbies, and told that they dare not bring in this Bill, and now this is the way in which they are trying to shelve it. Hitherto I have voted against this Bill, although at one time I proposed the reduction from five to four years. I have always believed that is a fair compromise—

Sir G. GREY.—I rise to a point of order. I solemnly declare that no representation was made to me that we dare not bring this Bill in.

Mr. McLEAN.—I accept the honorable gentleman's denial; but, somehow or other, friends speak for him generally. He does not speak for himself. He is always in the background. I know that in the lobbies it has been stated—by one positively—that the Bill was not to come into operation until after the present Parliament; and what has taken place to-day concurs with what I have heard in the lobbies—that those honorable gentlemen on the Opposition do not want this Bill at all. They think this a good opportunity for shelving it, and hence their action. That is the fact, and those honorable gentlemen know it. An honorable gentleman has told us that many honorable members who support the present Government voted against this Bill on former occasions. No doubt they did so, but so also did the honorable gentleman himself. Why, Sir, he went into the lobby with me against it on a very late occasion; and yet now he pretends to be a great friend of the people, and to be very desirous to have the Bill passed. He has characterized the present Government as being brass, while he and his were copper; but I think he shows a great deal of the former element when he speaks as he has done, in the face of the action which he and his party took in 1877 in regard to this Triennial Parliaments Bill. The present Government have shown the sincerity of their desire to carry out this liberal measure, so that there shall be no more mere talk about it; and I, for one, shall support them. And I say further that that Government shall sit on those benches until they have had an opportunity of fully explaining the state of the finances of the country, or I will have nothing more to say to them. They shall have an opportunity of explaining the position into which the late Government have allowed the country to drift—a position which, to my own knowledge, is most dangerous, and which demands from this House immediate relief. I do not envy any Government which has to put our finances into a proper position. It will tax the ingenuity of any Government to bring forward financial measures which will meet with the approval of the House. It is very kind of the honorable gentlemen on the Opposition benches to want to force us to a division now, when they think they have a majority, and when they know that four of our men are away.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—Sir, I rise to a point of order. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) was not allowed to continue his speech when he branched off from the subject of the Triennial Parliaments Bill, and referred to the want-of-confidence motion. This will be a very lengthy debate if we are allowed to do so.

Mr. Whitaker

Mr. SPEAKER.—I did not observe that the honorable member for Waikouaiti was wandering from the subject immediately under discussion. I must request honorable members not to diverge into the want-of-confidence motion.

Mr. McLEAN.—Sir, I shall always be most happy to be guided by you. I was simply answering the statements made by the honorable gentleman who moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think you were out of order on that occasion.

Mr. McLEAN.—Then I will not proceed further in that direction. I will ask honorable members if they really wish to see this Triennial Parliaments Bill the law of the land. I ask those honorable gentlemen who have declared to their constituents that they are in favour of it, whether they want to see it shelved by a side-wind. Let them face their constituents, and say whether they really mean to support the Bill, or whether they want to shuffle out of it, as the honorable member for Timaru has shuffled out of it and out of other matters lately. He is afraid of it—he dreads it becoming law. He does not want it, but he dares not vote against it except by this side-wind, so as to gull his constituents. That is the way in which that honorable member shuffles and changes with his constituents, promising one thing to-day and doing another to-morrow. He wants to shelve this measure, which is popular with the country. Let us see how many others will dare to go into the lobby with him on this occasion, and yet will dare to stand up and say they are in favour of the Bill. How many of those honorable gentlemen opposite are really in favour of the Bill? I know one very active supporter of the late Government—not in his place just now—who declared that we shall not pass this Bill so as to make it applicable to the present Parliament. That, too, is a provision embodied in the Bill prepared by the late Government, and is therefore a fair indication of their opinion. It shows clearly that, while the late Government were going to pass the Bill, they said at the same time, “We will take good care it sha’n’t affect ourselves.” I say, let us affect ourselves. What right have we to pass legislation affecting future Parliaments that does not affect ourselves? I have not supported this Bill on previous occasions; but, as the Government has brought it down, now I shall support it and see it carried through. Let those who were elected to carry this liberal measure dare to go into the lobby with the Opposition; for I tell them that if they do so they will be trying to shelve the Bill. Let us take the division at once, and let it be clearly understood that that division will show those who desire to shelve the Bill.

Mr. MACANDREW.—No.

Mr. McLEAN.—I know the honorable member for Port Chalmers does not like this Bill. I know that he and I have always gone into the lobby against it. We have a fellow-feeling in that respect. I may, however, go the length of saying that, while I was ready to make the term of Parliament four years before the provincial

system was abolished, I am now quite willing that it should be three years.

Mr. SWANSON.—I accept at once the challenge of the honorable gentleman, and shall vote for the adjournment of the debate, without any fear of its being said by my constituents that I do so because I want to shelve the Bill. No one ever asked me to support this Bill, but I told my constituents after my election that I should do so, and whenever the question has been brought before this House I have gone into the lobby in favour of it. There is no doubt that the country wants the Bill, and I am very glad to find that gentlemen whose feelings are against it are forced to give their vote with me in favour of it now. Let us pass it at once. I have often seen measures passed through this House at one sitting as matters of urgency, and I am quite ready to take the first, second, and third readings of this Bill this afternoon; but let us distinctly understand that we shall take the want-of-confidence motion the first thing on Tuesday, and have it fairly out. I understand an income-tax is to be proposed; and we have to readjust the seats, as well as pass this Triennial Parliaments Bill. All these are matters of urgency. Let us, then, get through them at once. I am ready to sit all night, and all day to-morrow, if necessary, so as to get through with them. I do not care what Government may be in power: if their measures are good I shall support them. I shall go into the lobby for the postponement of the debate, but, be it understood, not to vote against the Bill. In the meantime, if the Government will hurry it through as a matter of urgency, and you, Sir, will accord the indulgence usually granted at the close of a session, and allow it to be passed through all its stages at one sitting, let us go on with it at once; but let us understand each other.

Mr. BOWEN.—What does my honorable friend call “having it fairly out”? Does he mean that there is to be a second division on a no-confidence motion? I should like to know whether the honorable gentleman means that a vote of want of confidence is to be taken twice over before it is to be considered as having passed the House. That is what he must mean. The real reason for proposing the adjournment of the consideration of this Bill is to prevent business being done by the Government until the question of confidence in them is debated a second time.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There has been no vote of want of confidence in them debated.

Mr. BOWEN.—It amounts to the same thing. The leader of the present Government moved a vote of want of confidence in the late Government and carried it; and I say it is a monstrous proposition that every time a vote of that sort is carried we are to have a second edition of it the moment other honorable gentlemen get on those benches. It is an absolutely unconstitutional proceeding.—(Laughter from the Opposition.)—Honorable gentlemen may laugh, but those who do so have not taken the trouble to pay any attention to constitutional practice. It has been over and over again laid down that Ministers have a constitutional right to a fair consideration of their policy. It has been stated by

Ministers in the House of Commons that they would not accept any vote against them until their measures were fairly considered:

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman's remarks have no bearing on the Triennial Parliaments Bill.

Mr. BOWEN.—I was answering the statements made by the mover of the adjournment. The only reasons given for moving the adjournment of the debate had nothing to do with the merits of the Bill before the House. It was distinctly stated that we should not go on with this Bill because the Opposition would try to prevent the honorable gentlemen on those benches from carrying on the business. I submit therefore, with all deference to you, Sir, that I was only answering the reason given for the proposed adjournment, and was stating that it has been laid down over and over again by the best authorities that it is unconstitutional to prevent Ministers from carrying on the business of the country until Parliament has had an opportunity of knowing what their policy is. However, I will not dwell upon that point now, as there will be other opportunities of doing so. But this I will say—and I say it as one who is avowedly not a supporter of this particular Bill—that the opposition to the consideration of the measure is a factious interruption of the business of the country. I say, too, that, if the honorable gentlemen opposite are able to carry such an adjournment, the entire responsibility will rest with them of interrupting business at a most critical time for the country, and when, as they know quite well, every moment is of the utmost importance. I have said, "if they should carry the adjournment," for I have too high a sense of the honor and loyalty of honorable members on both sides of the House to believe that it will be carried. I do not think party feeling is so strong as to lead any one to vote against the immediate passage of a measure which he has openly promised to support. I trust no honorable member will so vote, merely for party purposes. Let us come to a division on the question, and the responsibility of obstructing business will rest with those honorable members who vote for the adjournment.

Mr. READER WOOD.—Whatever unconstitutional practice there may be in these proceedings, it comes entirely from the other side. If there is one constitutional course more clearly laid down than another, it is that, when notice of a motion of want of confidence is given, the Government, if they have any respect for themselves, immediately, of their own accord, propose that all business shall cease until that question has been determined. When notice of a motion of no-confidence in those honorable gentlemen is given, we are asked to give them a fair trial. Have they ever given the late Government a fair trial?

Mr. McLEAN.—Sir, you stopped me when referring to the no-confidence motion. Is the honorable member to be allowed to refer to it?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must call the attention of the honorable member for Waitemata to the rule I have laid down, that the House is not now at

liberty to discuss the vote of no-confidence, and therefore it must not be referred to.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—May I speak to the question of order now, so as not to interrupt the honorable gentleman when he resumes? I confess I am quite unable to see how we are to debate the question before the House unless we also debate the question closely connected with it. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) moved the adjournment of the debate on the distinct ground that he wished no business to be proceeded with until the want-of-confidence motion had been decided. I fail to understand how we are to discuss the question of adjournment without branching into the motion of no-confidence. If any way were pointed out, I should be glad to fall in with it; but, if I were to attempt to discuss the question before us, I should have to begin by going into the whole matter, in order to show whether it was right to arrest the public business at this stage. It is worthy of note that every honorable member, except the honorable member for Timaru, has been called to order by you, Sir, because they were leaving the subject before the House. If you will point out what the exact order is in such a case it would be a great convenience to the House. For my part, I fail to understand how any honorable gentleman can discuss the question of adjournment without touching upon the position of the Government as it is affected by the vote of want of confidence.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have already informed several honorable members that it is necessary to confine themselves to the question of adjournment, and not to discuss a matter which is fixed for discussion on Tuesday.

Mr. READER WOOD.—I quite agree with your ruling, Sir. I was doing the best in my power to avoid the necessity of any interference on your part with reference to a point of order. When I was interrupted I was speaking of what is now a matter of history—namely, what took place last session—and I then intended to refer to the remarks of the honorable member for Waipa and the honorable member for Kaiapoi, and I apprehend that in doing so I should be entirely in order. The honorable member for Kaiapoi stated that we were refusing to give Ministers a fair trial. I ask, in reply, when did they give the late Government a fair trial? When the late Government came down last session and announced, in His Excellency's Speech, the liberal measures they proposed to introduce, they were not allowed a fair trial—they were not allowed to bring their measures forward. An amendment was attached to the Address in Reply, and the power of introducing those measures was taken from them. Then the honorable gentleman says that we are interfering with the Government, and that we will not allow them to bring their measures forward. Their measures, forsooth! They are the measures of the honorable member for the Thames. They found them in the pigeon-holes, and adopted them. What did we hear the other day? That they were not prepared to go on with the business; and yet here we find them already prepared with the measures

Mr. Bowen

which they refused to allow the late Government to introduce. And what was the course they adopted at the beginning of this session? Precisely the course they adopted at the beginning of the last. Now, Sir, I am speaking of a State paper which is laid on the table, and on which I have the right to comment. Again the honorable member for the Thames came down with his liberal measures, and again he is checked by an amendment the effect of which nobody understands, except that it has placed those gentlemen on those benches under false pretences. Now, that amendment—which is part of the Address in reply to the Governor's Speech—contains words which have absolutely no meaning whatever, words which I should characterize as strongly resembling the Abacadabra, and the "Heigh—presto" of the conjuror. We have all seen a conjuror put different liquids into a couple of vases, and, with a "Heigh—presto," pass the liquid from one to the other. Here we have a "Heigh—presto" by which the member for Selwyn and his friends move the Government from their seats and take their places; but, as to meaning in their amendment, there is none. If the intention of the House had been to pass a vote of want of confidence in the late Government, one could easily have understood that; but the vote was a vote of want of confidence in the Government "as then constituted," thereby leading members to suppose that there would be a reconstruction; but the honorable gentlemen took advantage of the passing of that amendment to place themselves on those benches without the slightest attempt at reconstruction. The proper course—the fair course—for the honorable member for Selwyn to have adopted would have been to have attempted a reconstruction of the late Government—to have imported some of his own side into our side, and if he had failed in that, to have gone back to the Governor and told him that he was unable to form a Government in accordance with the views he had himself stated, and in accordance with the meaning the House had attached to the amendment to the Address in Reply. That is the course he should have adopted; but, failing that, he has placed himself on those benches with a number of gentlemen who are more objectionable to the members of this House than any member of the late Government ever was. He has placed there members of that old "continuous" Ministry of which Sir Julius Vogel was the head, which started in 1869 and lasted till 1877; which has been the fruitful cause of all the injury this colony has sustained; which has been the cause of the financial difficulty the honorable gentleman speaks of, and which he would endeavour to cast upon the gentlemen who lately occupied those benches.

Major ATKINSON.—Oh, oh!

Mr. READER WOOD.—The honorable gentleman may say "Oh, oh," but how has this financial difficulty arisen? Simply out of that speculative system of finance which was originated in 1870, which has been continued by the honorable gentleman who now occupies the position of Colonial Treasurer, and which has broken down. I say that those honorable gentlemen have no ground to stand

on whatever, and have no reason to show why the want-of-confidence motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers should not be gone on with at once. This is not a factious opposition—quite the opposite. They know perfectly well that the very fact of their placing on those benches members of that old continuous Ministry has shaken the confidence of many who would have been their supporters, and that they are now in a minority in this House. If they have any regard for their position they will give the honorable gentleman an opportunity of bringing forward his motion, and not by any side-wind put it down the Paper, and thus prevent us taking the vote of the House, which they know has no confidence in them.

Major ATKINSON.—It is a very significant fact that notice of the want-of-confidence motion has been given by a gentleman who always and upon every occasion has opposed a Triennial Parliaments Bill. I commend that fact to those who say that there is no conspiracy to burke this Bill. It is also a significant fact that the honorable member who moved the adjournment has opposed this Bill on every possible occasion, and yet we are told that it is in the interests of this Bill that the adjournment is asked for. Now, I ask if anybody can believe that for a moment. If they wish to see the Bill passed, now is their opportunity; let us put their professions to the proof. But I would ask, knowing the character of those gentlemen for parliamentary finesse, whether there is not something underlying this proceeding of to-day. I warn the friends of this Bill that there is a danger of its being lost if this motion is carried; and I hope they will bear these words in mind. It is no breach of confidence to tell the House that not a single measure of that Liberal Government is ready to be presented to this House. After two years' incubation, their liberal measures are still in a hopeless state of confusion. Underlings have been directed to draft them, and never to this day have they received the consideration of Ministers. And will the House believe that those gentlemen would be prepared to go on with the business on Tuesday, when that is the state in which they leave their offices? I am not going into questions of finance on this occasion—I will not even refer to the speculative finance touched upon by the honorable member for Waitemata—but I will undertake, on Tuesday next, to give the House an insight into the speculative finance of the honorable gentleman whom we fortunately turned out the other day. I will show that the finance of the country has been greatly neglected, and that it is in even a worse state than are those wretched Bills which those honorable gentlemen, after two years' incubation, and I do not know how many years before, have left for us. The forms of the House will not permit it, or I would produce them, in order to expose, and expose thoroughly, the insincerity of those gentlemen in pretending to desire to have these Bills passed. If they were sincere, why were these Bills not presented last session? They have had six weeks since then, and they are not in a fit state to be presented now. If they had been in a

fit state to be presented, my honorable friend at the head of the Government would have been prepared to go on with them to-day; but the Electoral Bill as it stands is simply nonsense. The honorable member for Waitemata says that we in 1877 did not give the honorable gentlemen opposite an opportunity to propound their policy, and he says that that was unconstitutional and wrong. Then, I would ask the honorable gentleman whether he wishes to perpetuate unconstitutional proceedings in this House. Surely, if we were wrong, his political morality will not permit the perpetration of the wrong a second time. He ought to show us a better example. But it happens that our proceedings were constitutional and that the honorable gentleman's are not. Upon what occasion did we refuse to hear those honorable gentlemen? Upon the first occasion they shelved the no-confidence motion by—I hardly know how to characterize it, but by—a method which was certainly opposed to all rules of parliamentary practice. When that motion was shelved by the casting vote of the Speaker, we had the pair of a gentleman who was absent, and the promise of the Government whip that it should be paired when produced. Relying upon that, we produced our pair, and then the Government whip declined to accept it. There is no disputing these facts; and if the ordinary parliamentary practice and the custom usually adopted amongst gentlemen had been given effect to, we should have had a majority at that time. Whichever way you like to take it, it was shelved upon these grounds: that it was unconstitutional to proceed to the condemnation of a Ministry until they had had an opportunity of declaring their policy to the country. That was the amendment which was moved by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, then member for Port Chalmers, which was carried, and which shelved the motion. Upon that occasion the House affirmed, in the way I have described it, the constitutional rule that it would not condemn any Ministry until it had an opportunity of making its statement to the House. Now, let us come to the other occasions. Last session, when we returned, the honorable gentleman had been performing that humiliating stumping tour through the country, beseeching people to do what Parliament was only too ready to do if he would produce measures which would enable it to do so, but which he invariably declined to do—begging people to assist him to do what he knew would be done instantly if it were only submitted to this House. The honorable gentleman, instead of attending to the administration of the country, had been devoting his time to that purpose; and when we came back we found nothing ready. We find even now, after all this time, that there is not one of those Bills fit to look at; for this Triennial Parliaments Bill only consists of two or three clauses. The honorable gentleman disowns this Bill altogether as being in the form in which he approves; and this is the only one at all complete out of the whole lot. Instead of presenting those Bills in a fit state to the House, the honorable gentleman was performing those extraordinary feats throughout the country. When we came back we found the whole business of the

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country in a terrible state of disorder. Nothing was done, nothing was ready; and, by one of the largest majorities which had ever been obtained in this House against a Government, we declared the honorable gentleman utterly unfit for his position. And why did we do that? Because we had had experience of him—because we knew that the Queen's Speech was only talk. We knew, by what the honorable gentleman had been saying during the recess, that he was not sincere in his desire for those measures; and the House, by an enormous majority, declared that he was entirely incapable of carrying out the policy which he had been trumpeting forth throughout the country. Not only that, but the administration of affairs was most wretched from beginning to end. I have a right to claim that it was most wretched, because this House has declared it by a majority of fourteen. Therefore that is a verdict which no one can gainsay. The administration was bad in the extreme. Then, when we came back on the present occasion, I should like to know what right the honorable gentleman had to demand anything. If he had been a constitutional Premier—if he desired to support the Constitution and the authority of the people and of this House—he would have resigned before the House met. He knew perfectly well that he had not the confidence of the country. He knew perfectly well that the elections had gone against him.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course there are some honorable gentlemen to whom facts are of no value. When facts come in their way they say, "So much the worse for the facts." That is the state of affairs on the present occasion. But the fact is patent that we are here, and the honorable gentleman there. If the country had not decided against him we could not have changed places in the way we have. The fact is still further patent that there are not eight men on that side of the House who believe that the honorable gentleman is fit to be a Minister. I never saw such—I was going to say gross, but perhaps it is not parliamentary—disloyalty to a leader as is displayed regularly, not upon occasions when men are out of temper, but on every occasion. In the lobbies you hear continually of the uselessness and worthlessness of the late Premier as a political man. That is the universal talk in the lobbies, not among the late Opposition, but among the friends of the honorable gentleman, and among men who actually voted for the late no-confidence motion, and who, in the simplicity of their hearts, think they are now going to keep him out of any new Government which may get into office. The honorable member for the Thames and Christchurch is master of the situation on that side, and, if the House should determine to turn us out, I caution honorable gentlemen who do not know the ways of this House not to be led into a trap in this matter. If the House turns us out, and puts a new Ministry on these benches, it will be a Ministry permitted to be there by the honorable member for the Thames, and on no other conditions is a Ministry possible from that side of the House.

Then, just one word with regard to the assertion that these measures belong to the honorable member for the Thames. I want to know his credentials for claiming them. I want to know his authority. Is it because he has stopped them from being passed for two years? What claim has he to them? They were introduced to the House years before he came into Parliament. They have been introduced while he was in Parliament, and he has failed on every occasion to give them the least support, and on more than one occasion he has actually gone against them. I want to know what claim he has to those measures. The only claim the honorable gentleman has on them is, that he thought it would be an effective electioneering cry, and he therefore got it up. The honorable gentleman is not particular as to any cry, so long as it will carry him on the top of the wave of popularity. I do hope and trust that honorable gentlemen who have now got an opportunity of dealing with those Bills will set aside party feeling, and will bear in mind that we on this side of the House have as absolute a right, in every possible respect, to be called the fathers of this measure as the honorable gentlemen on that side. There are honorable members on this side of the House who supported it regularly long before the honorable gentleman came into Parliament, and who have supported it consistently. Some members on the opposite side have also done so; but I say the leader of the Opposition has no right to claim it as his own. Judging him by his actions—and we have a right to judge men by their actions—he is the one man who has delayed their being placed on the Statute Book of the colony. Therefore I do hope honorable gentlemen will not be led away—I will not think that we are to be put off from an examination of the finances of the country and of other matters by such a motion as this—by the indecent haste with which those honorable gentlemen wish to cover up their shortcomings. I have had to give notice of a serious Bill to day, and I know the late Colonial Treasurer knew the country was in this state, and yet had not the courage to tell the House. He had not the courage to ask the House to pass the necessary measures, but preferred to trust to chance. Whether persons got payment or not was nothing to him so long as he remained in office. I would ask honorable members new to the House to give the present Government a fair opportunity of placing their measures before the country, and of submitting—and there can be no possible harm in that—the finances to independent criticism. Then, if they are not prepared to give us their confidence, they will not find us resisting a reasonable vote of want of confidence at any time. But we are bound, by the commission which His Excellency the Governor has laid upon us, to examine into the affairs, and place our policy clearly before the country. Honorable gentlemen opposite may be assured that we mean to do that, despite any want-of-confidence motion, or any endeavour they may make in order to cover up what would have been in a very different position if they had been the men they represent themselves to be—desirous

that this Parliament should have control of the finances and all other matters connected with the administration of the country—men desirous that the country should possess full information on all matters. If honorable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House are what they claim to be, they ought to be only delighted to find any one willing to do what my friends and myself have declared ourselves ready to do at so short a notice. I do trust honorable gentlemen will pause before they agree to the postponement of this debate. It is a snare. The only desire is to cover up things which ought to have been known, and, whatever those honorable gentlemen on the opposite side may do, the true state of our financial position shall be known before we leave these benches.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I think the only true statement the honorable gentleman who just sat down has made is, that there are some honorable gentlemen whose facts are of no value at all. I think that applies to almost all the facts stated throughout the honorable gentleman's speech—they are of no value. What was one of the facts on which he laid the greatest stress, and which he repeated over and over again? He said that I had always opposed the Triennial Parliaments Bill. I have been looking over *Hansard* for I do not know how many years, but I cannot find any record of such a thing, and I do not believe any record exists, at any rate for many years. I do not know how long it is since I came round to advocate the Triennial Parliaments Bill. I admit I was not always in favour of it, but I certainly have been for the last three years, and have not voted against it. So much for the facts the honorable gentleman has treated us to. I wish distinctly to have it understood that, in supporting the adjournment of the debate, I and those acting with me are by no means opposing the passing of the Triennial Parliaments Bill. To say otherwise is simply drawing a red-herring across the scent. We have every desire that this Bill shall be carried. It is our Bill, and not their Bill. The Bill was in print last year, and was intended to come into operation at the termination of last session of Assembly. That is now a mere clerical error, which will be remedied in Committee. Our object in supporting the adjournment is to compel the Government to accept our challenge. I consider that a most unconstitutional position has been taken up in connection with the notice of motion I gave to-day, representing, as I believe I do, a majority of this House. To shirk that question now is unworthy of the occupants of those benches. I hope honorable members will not be led away by the childish charges that we are attempting to oppose or burke this Bill. Nothing of the sort. We are determined this Bill shall be carried through; and we are also determined that our challenge shall be accepted in a clear, constitutional way.

Mr. HALL.—Before the question is put, I wish to add one word to the debate. The honorable gentleman who has just sat down has asked us to observe some constitutional rule, some constitutional practice. That is exactly what we ask this House to do, and we shall be able to show, at the proper time, that constitutional rule

and constitutional practice are entirely against the course the honorable gentleman is now adopting. There is nothing more clear, nothing more definite, and nothing more fully established, than that the Ministers of the Crown are entitled to a fair hearing and a fair trial. What is it that the honorable gentleman seeks to do? He asks this House to condemn us. For what? Is it for defects of administration? We have not had an opportunity yet of doing anything. Is it for our policy? He wants to deprive us of the opportunity of showing what our policy is. There is nothing more absolutely clear in parliamentary or constitutional rules than the practice which that great Assembly which should be our model distinctly lays down—that every newly-appointed Government have a right to lay their policy before the country, unless they are grossly unfit, by their antecedents or incapacity, to be trusted with any confidence whatever. I trust no honorable gentleman will go so far as to say that of us. I say, barring that, we are entitled, and the country is entitled, to what we now ask for. We do not care personally—I, personally, do not care two straws—when we leave these seats; but the country has a fair right to ask, and the country will ask, that those gentlemen who have been honored with the confidence of His Excellency, and appointed the representatives of the Crown in this House, shall have an opportunity of putting before the country the measures they believe to be necessary for the welfare of the country. As soon as we have done that, if we cannot continue on these seats by the confidence of the House, we shall be quite content to leave them. I say it is utterly unreasonable that we should be limited to Tuesday next, as that is a space of time altogether insufficient. Ordinary courtesy should compel honorable gentlemen to accept the statement that that time is altogether insufficient to enable us to come down to the House with a statement of our policy. The country will require that we shall do so. The country cares nothing whether Mr. A. or Mr. B. sits on these benches. The country wants the best Government it can get; and the country will condemn any improper obstruction. If honorable gentlemen opposite insist on our immediate removal because they have converted one honorable member who last week voted one way, and have persuaded him to vote in a contrary direction, the country will condemn it. The country will condemn any proceeding by which members placed on these seats are to be hunted out of office before they have had an opportunity of speaking to the country and telling the country what measures they believe should be brought forward. I do not wish to say anything harsh, but I say, from the insight which we have had into the offices, we ask this House to give us an opportunity of going further into matters. I ask honorable gentlemen to do themselves this justice, and not to deny us the opportunity of going further, and ascertaining that which we believe should be ascertained. If they approve of this motion at such a time as this, they will deprive us of that opportunity, and I say that the House and the country will not approve of

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their action. My answer to the honorable gentleman who asked whether we would not give precedence to his motion on Tuesday is this: We will not give precedence to his motion on Tuesday; we will go on with the business as soon as we have an opportunity of finding out what the state of the offices is.

An Hon. MEMBER.—When?

Mr. HALL.—I cannot exactly tell you. Those honorable gentlemen can tell better than we can when. The further we go the further we may have to go. As soon as we have had that fair opportunity which we ask, then we will give precedence to the honorable gentleman's motion: we will then not shrink for one moment from any resolution which may test the confidence of this House—we will then give honorable gentlemen every facility for doing that. If the House will not give us its confidence, we shall then leave these seats; we shall not take three days to consider whether we shall resign or not. With regard to the particular motion itself for the adjournment of the debate, I am afraid that we have wandered somewhat from it. What would honorable members opposite gain by carrying the adjournment, and postponing the consideration of this Triennial Parliaments Bill, which some members of the late Government say is their Bill, and which others say is not their Bill at all? Should this particular Bill be postponed, what would they gain? Do they think they would force us into doing what they want? Certainly not; we would go on precisely the same. Supposing they carry their motion by a chance majority in the absence of some of our supporters, they cannot force us to give precedence to the want-of-confidence motion. This Bill, which the people have asked for, and which honorable members have been asked to pass, would indeed be postponed for an indefinite period. On that ground alone I appeal to the honorable gentleman to withdraw his motion. It can do no good, and if carried it may do a great deal of harm.

Mr. MOSS.—After what has fallen from the Premier, I do not see how he can consistently object to the adjournment of the House in order that the motion brought forward by the honorable member for Port Chalmers may be considered. The honorable member says he has taken up a purely constitutional ground, and also that he asks for that which a Ministry recently appointed has always a right to receive from the House. I find in Todd's "Parliamentary Practice," page 418, "It has never been the usage in England for any Government, upon acceding to office, to make use of its power and influence in Parliament to bring under investigation the acts of its predecessors." That is exactly the opportunity which the Ministry tell us they desire to have, and I am quite sure that on this side of the House we are perfectly willing they should have the opportunity. They will remain in office long enough to ransack every pigeon-hole, and to get all possible information they desire. When they have got it they will not be able to use it so long as they remain on those benches. They are debarred, according to the

constitutional usage and practice of the Imperial Parliament, to which I have referred, from bringing under investigation the acts of their predecessors so long as they remain in office. But if they are relegated to the other side of the House we shall have the benefit of the information acquired. That is what I take to be the constitutional view of the position. As to its being unfair and contrary to usage to attack the Government, I admit that, as far as my reading enables me to judge, it is very unusual in the Imperial Parliament to bring down a vote of want of confidence in Ministers until they have had an opportunity of laying their policy before the country. But it is distinctly laid down that this is only done out of respect to the Sovereign, by whom they are in England directly appointed. I do not think the same rule applies here. We might as well claim for the Legislative Council of New Zealand the privileges of the House of Peers at Home. I object to the introduction of English precedents to guide us, when we are asked to take the letter of those precedents, and not look into the spirit of them. As to the other reason alleged by the Hon. the Premier why a vote of want of confidence should not be considered at present, I have fairly shown that, if they did think fit to constitute themselves a detective Ministry, neither the House nor the country can derive the slightest benefit from their researches in the pigeon-holes, or from the great discoveries they are going to make, so long as they remain in their present position. No one is more desirous than I am to see the Triennial Parliaments Bill become law, and I would oppose any motion for adjournment if I thought it would interfere with the passing of that measure; but I am sure that unless the Government that sits on those benches absolutely commands the confidence of this House it will be impossible that any business can be proceeded with. They may make a little rush, and possibly they may succeed in carrying the second reading of a Bill, but obstacles will arise, and the Government will find themselves in a minority, and be unable to carry on the business of the country. I do hope the Government will not depart from the constitutional usage, but, after having taken ample time to ransack the pigeon-holes, will allow the motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers to be brought forward.

Major ATKINSON.—I wish to make a personal explanation. The honorable member for Port Chalmers gave as one of his statements of fact that he had not opposed the passing of a Triennial Parliaments Bill. I refer him to Vol. XIX. of *Hansard*, 1875, page 36. When the Bill was last introduced by Mr. Reynolds, he will find by the division list Mr. Macandrew voting against it, Sir George Grey voting against it, and Mr. Sheehan voting against it. He will find Mr. Bryce and myself voting for it.

Mr. MACANDREW.—That is four or five years ago.

Mr. GISBORNE.—The honorable gentleman opposite has given us an extraordinary instance of his own inconsistency. In 1878 he voted against the Bill. That is a later date, but the

honorable gentleman has forgotten it. His memory goes beyond that date. The honorable member for Selwyn asks for fair-play; but there should be reciprocity in these matters. We complain that the honorable member has dealt unfairly with this House, after obtaining a bare majority on a vote of want of confidence against the late Ministry. By the wording of that resolution, it was the understanding of all honorable members that he would reconstruct a Ministry that would have the confidence of this House. After he had succeeded in getting that majority on this understanding, he forgot the understanding, and he has selected himself and his colleagues on those benches from one party in the House. Therefore the question is, Has he the confidence of the majority of this House or not? That question ought to be tried before any public business is proceeded with. We argue as the honorable member for Egmont argued in 1877, when the late Premier first assumed office. The honorable gentleman immediately tabled a want-of-confidence motion, although there had been a majority of three or four against his own Ministry. His argument was, We say that you have not the confidence of the majority of this House, and it is unconstitutional, improper, and unseemly that a Government should be sitting on those benches which is actually in a minority in this House. The question to be decided is, Does that state of things exist now or not? As soon as it has been decided that it does not, it will be quite right for honorable members to go on with the public business; and we on this side of the House—at any rate as far as I am concerned—will be willing to give them every assistance in carrying on our measures. But, until that has been decided, it is not a question of the merits of this Bill or that Bill; it is the great constitutional question of whether a Government should sit on those benches which does not possess the confidence of a majority of the representatives of the people. The honorable member for Egmont said that our Bills were in disorder, and that we had brought nothing before the House. Now, what chance had we during the last two sessions of bringing measures before the House, except, perhaps, for a little time last session? Directly the Governor's Speech was delivered, and the Address in Reply was proposed, we were met by an amendment of want of confidence. But look at the Bills called "dropped Bills," which include Government Bills among others, that were brought in during the first session in 1879—two months ago! Look at these Bills which were brought before the House, and which were at least in such order that they could be laid on the table of the House. There are the Bribery Bill, the Chinese Immigrants Bill, the Electoral Bill—

Major ATKINSON.—The Electoral Bill?

Mr. GISBORNE.—Yes; it is here on the list of dropped Bills—Bills which had been laid on the table of the House. They have got the imprint of the Ministers who brought them in, and are part of the records of the House. They had been circulated—

Major ATKINSON.—Will the honorable

gentleman give the names of the authors of the Bills which the late Government proposed to introduce this session, and say that they were distributed?

Mr. GISBORNE.—I am talking of last session. The honorable gentleman said we had got no Bills ready to carry out our policy. I say that last session we introduced and laid on the table several political Bills, and I am now enumerating them. There are the Bribery Bill, the Chinese Immigrants Bill, the Electoral Bill, the Land Act Amendment Bill, the Plurality of Votes Bill, and the Representation Bill. These were part of our political programme, and they were all laid before the House last session. We should have been prepared, if we had had an opportunity, to lay the Bills—and, of course, in some instances, revised Bills on the same subjects—before the House. But we never had that opportunity, and the honorable member has no right to bring it as a charge against us that we have not brought forward Bills this session, when the first thing that was done by his honorable friend was to meet us with a vote of want of confidence. I hope the majority in this House will not be misled by all these appeals which have been made, or at all influenced by the terrorism which is attempted to be exercised over them when they are told that the constituencies of the country will object to the public business not being proceeded with. The simple question—and it is a question which the people in any free country will appreciate—is this: Is a Ministry to govern this country which does not possess the confidence of the representatives of the people?

Mr. DE LA TOUR.—Sir, I think the House should clearly understand what the vote really is. The vote, as I take it, will be a vote of confidence or no confidence in the Government. That is clearly the issue. It is, whether this House has confidence in the Government. In no other form can we bring the motion on. The Premier has assured us to-day emphatically that we are not to be allowed to bring on a motion of want of confidence—that the Government will purposely keep such a motion back. Well, the shortest way to arrive at a vote on that question is to take it on this motion. The whole debate has been whether this House has confidence in the Government or not. The speeches of the Treasurer and the Premier were speeches on behalf of the Government. They have not been attacked, and I do not care to attack them now; but the vote emphatically will be as to whether this House has confidence in the Government or not. We have been told that it is constitutional for the Government to pay no attention to a notice of motion such as has been given by the honorable member for Port Chalmers. Now, the precedents that have been quoted are from those old times when the Crown exercised a high prerogative—when Ministers were kept in power against the popular will by the influence of the Crown; and I do not think that they are applicable to our times. I am quite sure that the spirit of the people of this country will allow no exercise of that high prerogative, in the highest estate of these realms, to keep in office a Ministry not pos-

sessing the confidence of this House. I only rose to point out what the real issue is on this vote. We can allow for absent men; and there will be no accusation against our side of a mere wish to catch an opportunity, one or two members being absent. Allowances can be made for that. I think that, as the Government will not allow an opportunity to the honorable member for Port Chalmers, we may very well take the vote to-day on this motion. I think the leader of the Opposition has a right to ask his supporters to vote for the postponement of this Bill until Tuesday or Wednesday. After the motion for the postponement is carried, it will then be for honorable members to fix the date to which it shall be postponed. There will be no shelving the Bill at all. That is no question before us now; it is merely as to whether this Bill shall be read a second time now or on Wednesday next. I do think that we are entitled to meet the Government on their own ground, and to credit their statement. They have said that the policy of the late Government is their policy. I think we are entitled to credit them in that respect, and therefore to negative the request they make to us now to have time to bring forward another policy. We on our side are quite satisfied with the late Government's policy. The honorable gentlemen have told us it is their policy. Very well, we accept it. Why should they fabricate another policy? I do not know that anything need be said at all as to the appeals which have been made to independent members to give them a trial. I would say this to honorable members who have not been previously in this House: that perhaps the explanation why we do not attach so much importance to these appeals as they may feel inclined to do is that we have borne the heat and burden of the day; we have been in all these conflicts; we have never had quarter given to us; and it is a strange thing to us that appeals—piteous appeals—should be made to us, who have never received quarter, to give unusual quarter to our adversaries. We also fight fairly and straightforwardly—that has been the rule in this House—using the political weapons that are available; and the honorable gentlemen, especially the honorable member for Egmont, have no right to complain. Last year, as has been said, the late Government were never allowed to make a single administrative statement to the House. For two sessions they have never been allowed to make a statement about administration. And, really, in the face of such facts, for the honorable members—the old political men who are sitting on those benches—to ask us piteously to give them time and to beg for quarter is a very strange thing. I do not see why we should not divide at once, and take a decision on this motion as being the opinion of the House. I am quite sure this House is not prepared, on behalf of the country, to allow any recurrence to those old days of high prerogative when a Government had to be kept in power against the will of the majority in Parliament. I hope we shall hear no more hints, by the precedents which the Premier has given us, that such a state of things is likely to come

Major Atkinson

about. I am quite sure it will not be tolerated in our days, when responsible government has reached to the extent it has in the colonies, where no voice is known but the voice of the Parliament, being the voice of the majority in the Representative Chamber.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—The last speaker has made a statement which I am quite sure the House will not be prepared to accept. He asks the Government to take the decision of the House in respect to one matter as the decision of the House in respect to another. He asks the House, in voting for the adjournment of the debate, to say that it has no confidence in the Government. If the Opposition are reduced to such a strait that they have to take the division on the question of the adjournment of a debate as indicative of the decision of the House on a matter of such importance as that of which notice has been given by the honorable member for Port Chalmers, I am very sorry for them. I do not wish here to go at length into recriminations with regard to the past, but I think there are two or three things in the present debate that it is necessary to notice. We heard, for the first time in this debate, that the honorable member for Port Chalmers is the leader of the Opposition. It occurred to me then, as it would to honorable members all round the House, what a strange position politics have got into. I was going to use a word stronger than "strange." Our whole parliamentary system has been degraded and degenerated by the course taken by the late Government during the last two years. We are suddenly informed that the honorable member for Port Chalmers is the leader of the Opposition. Well, Sir, what has this party been for the last two years? Has it come to this—what we have heard all round the country—that members were returned on what has been called the "Grey ticket"—that members paraded the name of an honorable gentleman who has occupied prominent positions, and is respected very much in other countries as well as in New Zealand—that his name was paraded, his flag raised, and then the members who have come in under the shadow of his wing are to ignore him, are to set him on one side, and to appeal to sentences they have inserted in addresses—saving clauses which will enable them now to set aside their leader? Such political perfidy, whatever may be the result of it in this House, will be deemed by the country to be an insult. The argument has been raised in this House that honorable members on this side the House have held different opinions on the question of this Bill. Now, I am one of those members who have held a different opinion as to the expediency of this Bill. The fact is, that the question of triennial Parliaments is a question of degree. It is a question of what time is most expedient for the duration of a Parliament. It is not a question of principle at all. I have held in the past that the adoption of triennial Parliaments would lead to throwing the control of the elections into the hands of men of wealth to a greater extent than is now the case; and on that ground I have always felt that this measure was of very doubtful expediency. My opinion has changed with regard to it, partly be-

cause I am satisfied that the country is intent upon testing the merits of this measure, and partly because I recognize that a great difficulty has arisen in our Constitution in respect to dissolutions of Parliament. A great difficulty arises in these colonies in connection with the dissolutions of Parliament, because our system of finance differs from that of the Old Country. In the Old Country the prerogative of the Crown with regard to dissolutions can be unconditionally exercised in respect to the granting of supplies, because a year's supplies are given in advance, and an appeal to the country can be granted by the Crown without interfering, as is liable to be the case here, with public payments and the public convenience throughout the country. But here our finance is not the same, and the Crown is not able to give unconditional dissolutions without to some extent imperilling the interests of the people at large. I think that this question of triennial Parliaments comes to this: that it diminishes any necessity which is likely to arise for the granting of dissolutions; and for that reason I think the Bill is one which should be supported, and which I must myself support. Reverting again to the question of differences of opinion between members of the Government, I should like to say that there are members on these benches who have held different opinions from mine; but while we are here we shall always express one opinion and one policy, and we are not going to vote in different lobbies on subjects that come before the House. So long as we are on the Government benches, we are going to represent the united opinion and policy which we are prepared to support; or we leave these seats. The honorable member for Mount Ida said we were taking up the policy of the late Government, and that, as the policy of the late Government was well known, we are not entitled to say that our policy is not before the country. I say it is perfectly ridiculous to make the statement that the policy of the late Government in these two or three measures is the entire policy of the present Government. We have got measures to bring down—and will bring them down—which are considerably in advance of the measures of the late Government, and some of them are of more practical, immediate interest for the wants of the country than any proposed by the late Government. We do not ask for quarter. We want no quarter. We will only maintain our positions so long as we can do it with honor and pride. We have a duty here as Ministers of the Crown; we have a duty here as representatives of the people; we have a duty here to ourselves and to the country; and we will maintain our positions here until such time as we have performed that duty. The House may rely upon that. I speak with all due respect to the House, and nobody will yield more cheerfully than I will to the decision of the House when the proper time has come. There will be no shirking a want-of-confidence motion when we have done our duty to the Crown, to the people, to ourselves, and to the House. There need be no mistake about it. We will not accept a motion for the adjournment of the House as a decision upon

the question as to whether His Excellency's Ministers have the confidence of the House. A more ridiculous proposal was never made.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—The adjournment of the debate upon a Government Bill. I did not say "adjournment of the House."

Mr. KELLY.—I had not intended to speak upon this occasion, and should not have done so had it not been for a few remarks by the honorable member for Mount Ida. He is a gentleman whom I always like to listen to, because he generally speaks fair, and what he says is mostly worth listening to; but on this occasion I think he has fallen into an error. He said that the late Government never asked for quarter.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—Never got it.

Mr. KELLY.—That is a very different thing. But I know they did ask for quarter, and that they got it, because I was one of those who gave it to them in 1877. Honorable members who were in the House on that occasion will remember this: that when the Atkinson Government were turned out of office by a majority of three—I supported the Atkinson Government, and formed one of the minority—and when the Grey Government came in, a vote of want of confidence was tabled at once. It was then said by the members and supporters of the Grey Government that it was unfair to table a want-of-confidence motion until the Government had had an opportunity of stating their policy to the House. That was asking quarter; and quarter was then given. No member of the late Government or its supporters will deny that they then contended it was unfair to table a want-of-confidence motion until the Government had had an opportunity of making their Financial and Public Works Statements. And what was the result? The appeal made to the House was responded to, and the Hon. Mr. Reynolds—not at that time honorable; he was a member of this House then—myself, and others considered the motion rather premature, and that the forbearance claimed by the Grey Ministry should be given. Therefore, when the House came to consider the matter, it was resolved to give them an opportunity of developing their policy before the adverse vote was carried. That altogether refutes the statement made by the honorable member for Mount Ida—that quarter was neither asked nor obtained by the Grey Government. Quarter was asked for by that Government, and the House acceded to the request. When the want-of-confidence motion came on, an amendment was moved by Mr. Reynolds to the effect that, as they had had no opportunity of submitting their policy to the House and country, the motion would be premature, and therefore ought not to be passed. The result was that the House divided on the question. There was a tie, and the Speaker gave his casting vote in favour of the Government. If the members of the late Government will recollect what occurred on that occasion, and will apply to themselves the same rule which the House applied on that occasion, they will see that it would be only fair to give the present Government a chance. I shall take up the same position now as then. I

Mr. Rolleston

was a supporter of the Atkinson Government, but I considered that, until the new Government had had an opportunity of bringing forward their policy, and of stating what were their measures, it was unjust to vote against them. Upon that principle I and other gentlemen acted; and, if that was the right course in the year 1877, surely it is the right course to pursue now. The question now before the House is simply whether the Triennial Parliaments Bill shall be read a second time, or whether the debate shall be adjourned. But the honorable member for Mount Ida wants to have the matter placed on such a footing that, if the House is pleased to adjourn the debate, that decision is to be accepted as expressive of want of confidence in the Government. That is most unfair. I never heard a more nonsensical statement in my life. I think the proper course is to do as was done on the occasion to which I have referred—give the Government ample time to bring forward their financial policy and their public works policy. That was what was done in 1872. In proof of that, I need only appeal to the speech of a strong supporter of the late Government, Mr. Rees. Referring to the course pursued by Mr. Vogel, when the Fox-Vogel Ministry was defeated by Mr. Stafford in 1872, Mr. Rees said,—

"Mr. Stafford's vote of want of confidence was carried on the 5th September, and he was sworn in on the 10th September. The House went into Committee of Supply, and Mr. Gillies moved the old estimates, on the 23rd September—thirteen days after the Ministry was sworn in. No Financial Statement had been made, and it was not made until four days after going into Committee of Supply. The Public Works Statement was made on the 2nd October; and then, when the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement were fully before the country, Mr. Vogel moved his want-of-confidence motion on the 4th October."

This gave Mr. Stafford's Government twenty-four clear days, after being sworn in, to declare their policy, while the present Government is attacked by a want-of-confidence motion on the very day they take office. Such a course is simply monstrous, and quite opposed to all constitutional practice. The proper course is to give the Government ample time to bring down their Financial Statement and their Public Works Statement, and then tackle them on the question of want of confidence. If the Opposition wish to give the Government fair-play, and wish to show the country that they do so, let them give the Government time to bring down their financial policy, their public works policy, and their Native policy; and, in order to do that, let them withdraw the present motion. It may be thought by members residing in the South Island that the disturbances on the West Coast are of trifling importance, but I will tell them, as a resident in the North Island of twenty-two years, and having several times had to move from country into town owing to the danger arising from Native disturbances, that this Native question affects the whole colony. It does not affect the settlers on the West Coast only, although it is a

matter which means ruin to them unless settled within a very short time.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

Mr. KELLY.—When the House adjourned, I had risen to reply to a statement made by the honorable member for Mount Ida (Mr. De Launty). In the year 1877, the members of the Grey Government received quarter at the hands of members of this House who had hitherto supported their opponents; and I went on to argue that it was only fair that the same line of conduct should be pursued on the present occasion. These were the sentiments that guided my conduct in 1877, and which will also guide my conduct now. I think it very desirable that this course should be taken now, because it is very evident to any person at all acquainted with political matters that no Government ought to be condemned until they have had an opportunity of showing the House and the colony what their policy is and what they intend to do. It would be a waste of time on the part of the Opposition to proceed in the manner they are now doing, because it will not serve the purpose intended, and the country will be disgusted with them. I said before that I personally desire to know what is the financial policy of the present Government, also what their public works policy is, what their Native policy is, and what their land policy is. As yet they have had no opportunity of showing what this is. If that opportunity is afforded them, and the policy that is brought down, especially with regard to Native affairs and land, is not of such a nature as would be calculated to benefit the colony and those who live in it, they will not find me a supporter of theirs. I have no doubt that the same feeling is entertained by many honorable members of this House; and it is to be thought for a moment that I am to be caught in the meshes of the Opposition, unless they give me an opportunity of judging of the policy which the present Government intend to submit to the House and to the country? I think it is the most unwise course that could be adopted. With regard to Native affairs, it will be seen that the question is not only attracting attention in this House, but also in England; and it is no use looking it over, and it is no use delaying settlement of it any longer. The sooner the thing is met fairly and dealt with in the proper way the better, not only for the interests of the Natives, but also for those of the Europeans. I think the interests of the Natives and the Europeans are identical. What is the position of affairs at present on the west coast of this Island? We find that the Natives, under the influence of Te Whiti—a fanatic, but a very clever man, although I admit that he is insane on any religious point—are in actual rebellion against the Government of the colony. What about the Europeans? We find them in a state of great alarm, and armed almost to a man in consequence of these Natives. What

has the late Government done to allay the state of alarm on the West Coast—alarm on the one side of the Natives, and alarm on the other side on the part of the European inhabitants, both the Natives and the Europeans desiring not to have war?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable member is travelling beyond the question before the House.

Mr. KELLY.—I am one who is a friend to the Natives, and always have been. I have admired their many good qualities, and their bravery in the field; and I am desirous that their wants should be attended to, and that the Europeans on their side should not be kept in a state of alarm. I want to know what is the policy of the present Government as regards the Native question and the land question also. The late Government were two years in office. I helped to keep them in office for the purpose of ascertaining what their policy was, and I was greatly surprised at that policy. We have in Taranaki very good land, upon which persons of small capital desiring to settle were enabled to do so under the Act of 1874. In 1877 that law was entirely altered by the Government in power then, and now in opposition. I say, with respect to the policy of deferred payments which is at present in operation, and which is called the great Liberal policy, that it is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. The sooner such a system is put an end to, the better for the people of the colony. I did not intend to speak on this question, and was not prepared to do so; but I was induced to address the House by the remarks which were made by the honorable member for Mount Ida. In conclusion, I simply state this: I have no doubt that on both sides there are members who will not be beguiled by these miserable tactics which are being pursued by the Opposition. I will appeal to those gentlemen to act with a truly independent spirit, to judge for themselves, and then come to the conclusion whether it is for the interests of the colony that the present Government should not have a fair trial.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS.—Sir, I did not intend rising to speak in this debate until quite recently, because I thought that the present Opposition would probably reconsider their determination to push this matter to a division. The honorable member for Port Chalmers says that he is willing to accept the decision of this House loyally. Well, now, I say, if that is an honest expression of the feeling of the honorable member, he ought to accept the decision of this House given the other day. That was not a decision come to in any hurried way, in the absence of any honorable members, or with undue precipitation. Although that division was carried by a very small majority, we must consider it was the outcome of a very lengthy party fight. The party then in opposition had been previously successful by a very large majority, and the Grey party had gone to the country on the question as to whether they were right or wrong. I need not point out how the Grey Government managed to return more members to this House than I think represent the real

opinion of the country; I need not go into their electioneering now: but I will simply ask, in spite of all that was done—whether rightly done or wrongly done; and much of their electioneering was unconstitutional—yet, Sir, in spite of all their efforts, what was the result? We came back again, and, according to constitutional usage, the matter was immediately debated once more, and there was a majority for us and against them. Now, I say the honorable member for Port Chalmers ought to accept that decision loyally, and ought not to waste any more time in debating motions of want of confidence. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) referred to the debate of last year, and he said that, while they then met the first no-confidence motion readily, yet he admitted that they practised certain tactics in order to defeat the second motion of no-confidence. Now, Sir, is not the Government doing exactly the same thing now? Although the parties are changed—one is now where the other was then—yet I say this is the same way of fighting. We have already had two debates upon this matter, besides a general election, and these debates have been decided in a way that is favourable to the party which recognizes the honorable member for Selwyn as its leader. Well, to put the worst possible construction on the motives of the Government, what are they doing now? Having fought these people twice, and beaten them, they say, "We will not fight again, until we have laid our policy before the country, and until we have had some chance of showing how well or how badly we can administer the affairs of the colony." What is the answer to that? There is no answer. The honorable member for Mount Ida—a man whom I am always very glad to hear speak in this House, with whose ideas I largely sympathize, and whom I consider one of the best members in this House, at all events on theoretical questions—wishes us to interpret this motion—a mere motion for adjournment of the debate on the second reading of the Triennial Parliaments Bill—as a no-confidence motion. Well, it does not express that in any way whatever. It cannot be held to express it by any twisting of language which the honorable member for Mount Ida can possibly use, and I am quite sure that honorable members of this House will not accept the interpretation given to them by the honorable member for Mount Ida. When the motion is one for the adjournment of this debate, we will not accept the honorable member's meaning, that it is a want-of-confidence motion. It is not anything of the kind. I am quite sure that on this motion general questions of policy will not be debated, and the Minister of Lands has already said that the Government will not accept it as a no-confidence motion. The Government are quite right. I contend that, according to constitutional precedent, the Government have been so lately placed upon those benches that they ought certainly to have a fair trial. I hope that the present Opposition, after this very long fight, will at all events not follow the honorable member for Port Chalmers when he wishes to move a vote of want of confidence,

Mr. Acton Adams

and gives notice of that motion before he has left the bench upon which he was sitting as a member of the late Government, and before the new Government are sworn in. I think I never saw so eminently improper a proceeding. Of course, I have not had the chance of seeing many proceedings, not having long been in the House; but I have never read of such an improper proceeding, and I have had some chance of reading what has taken place in different Parliaments. I will refer honorable gentlemen to Todd's "Parliamentary Government," page 212, &c., as to the question of whether honorable gentlemen opposite are treating this question in a constitutional way or not. Mr. Todd writes,—

"The Ministers chosen by the Sovereign are entitled to receive from Parliament, if not 'an implicit confidence,' at the least 'a fair trial.' This has been the established rule and practice of the Constitution."

I refer them to the conduct of Mr. Pitt in 1783, when for a long time he held office against an overwhelming majority. Todd says,—

"Mr. Pitt took his stand upon the principle that it was irregular for the House to endeavour to control the Crown in the choice of its Ministers by denouncing them without waiting to see their acts."

Again, in 1801 a similar question arose, and Mr. Todd says,—

"Mr. Pitt expressly claimed that the new Ministers were entitled at the outset to a constitutional confidence; in other words, that, unless some good reason was assigned to the contrary, the House was bound, by the best principles of policy, as well as by the true spirit of the Constitution, to wait to see the conduct of Ministers before they should withhold their confidence. The House of Commons acquiesced in this reasoning, and refrained from any attempt at disturbing the new Ministry."

Again, in 1807, on a no-confidence debate, Mr. Todd writes,—

"The ex-Ministry had a majority in both Houses. But Parliament refused to concur in resolutions of censure, or to take any steps towards refusing to the new Ministers of the Crown a fair trial."

The same author concludes his references to this subject in these words:—

"Having vindicated the right of the Sovereign to the free choice of his constitutional Advisers by whom the administration of the Government is to be conducted—a freedom which necessitates that they should be unreservedly accepted by Parliament at the outset of their career until they prove themselves, by their general policy and public conduct, to be undeserving of confidence," &c.

I certainly wish to see the present Government remain in office until they have a fair chance of showing the House what their policy is. I am not a very warm admirer of all the members of the present Ministry, but I have given no uncertain sound as to my views with regard to triennial Parliaments and other liberal measures. I have heard it stated in no-confidence debates that the honorable member for Selwyn and his supporters were

not true Liberals, as they did not really believe in the Grey policy. I say, therefore, that, as far as my small efforts can go, they shall have a fair trial; they shall have a fair chance of bringing down these measures; and if they fail to bring in such Bills as the Electoral Bill and this Triennial Parliaments Bill, I shall be one of the first men to vote against them. I do not wish that there should be any uncertain sound about my Liberalism. I set up to be a thorough and true Liberal, and I will support any Government that will give to the people of New Zealand one of the best electoral constitutions it is possible to give to any people. We have arrived at a period in our history when all parties are agreed as to the extension of the franchise, and I think, such being the case, now or never is the opportunity to pass measures which will enlarge the electoral franchise, and not only enlarge it, but place it on a permanent and practical basis. I may be permitted to refer to the Electoral Bill. The two franchises there provided are very intelligible. They are permanent, and will not require to be altered, and I think we shall be granting a great boon to the people if we grant these extended franchises to them. I say to all new members of the House—to all those who can in any way separate themselves from party feeling—that the debate to-night ought to be treated as a matter of principle, and not as a matter of party. The question before the House is one of the most important Bills in our new Liberal programme, and I ask honorable members, will they like to be told, when they go back to their constituents, "Oh! you voted against the second reading of the Triennial Parliaments Bill; or, at all events, you voted for postponing what we conceive to be a very great boon"? No doubt honorable members will be ready enough with excuses; but I ask those who have experienced contested elections what chance they will have to explain their conduct in a satisfactory manner. It is not very easy to explain questions of party to large assemblages of electors, and I am quite sure those honorable gentlemen who vote for the adjournment of the second reading of the Triennial Parliaments Bill will find they have something to answer for when next they meet their constituents. I feel that I should have something to answer for if I took that course, and I shall not place myself in such a position. I ask honorable members to consider. I ask them whether they are prepared to give up the debates in this House to these two contending parties, or whether they will join with me and others in trying to forward the business of the country as much as we can. It is now three months since we were called together to do business, and up to the present time we have done practically nothing. We have been—perhaps not wasting time, but—spending time in deciding what half-dozen gentlemen shall sit on those benches; and I say if we are to prolong that sort of contest it will be taking a course not creditable to ourselves or beneficial to the country. I trust honorable gentlemen will consider this well before they join the honorable member for Port Chalmers in adjourning the debate on this very important Bill. It is not as if this question of no-confidence

could not be tried. It can be tried well enough on a day not far distant. I have no doubt it could be tried very well towards the end of next week, or at the beginning of the following week; but I say, if it could not be tried for a month, I would vote in that direction, because I think the very least we can do to the men at present on the Government benches, who have got there after a long and protracted struggle, when the merits and demerits of both sides have been fully discussed, is to see whether they can develop in themselves any means of governing the people better than they have been governed during the last two years. I am waiting to see if they have that power in them. Many of them are politicians of old standing; all are men of some mental standing; and I am certainly not prepared to embarrass them in their efforts to get their policy before the House and the country. I ask the younger members of the Grey party to consider this well. Their leaders have said, and they perhaps believe it, that the present Government have no intention to pass these liberal measures—that it is a snare and a delusion. But the honorable member for Selwyn is now on the Government benches, and the first day he appears there as Premier he brings down one of the most important parts of the Liberal programme. Are you then going to stop him at the outset? Are you going to shut the door and prevent him carrying this out? Will you not give him a fair chance to pass these liberal measures, and to develop the powers of administration of his Government? If, after he has had a fair and honest trial, we find him wanting, then I shall be prepared to join with other honorable members in passing a vote of want of confidence in him; but, until he and his Government show that they do not deserve the confidence of the House, I am not prepared to embarrass them in the way sought by the motion before the House.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—We have had, Sir, I think, a striking illustration this afternoon of the truth of what has been said by the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Bryce), who now sits on the Government benches—that, however desirous a certain gentleman might be to see liberal measures passed, he is infinitely more desirous that they should be passed by him than that they should be passed at all. Notwithstanding the large amount of time which has been spent on this debate, we have had some compensation in that exhibition. We have seen one member of the Grey Government eagerly claiming this Bill as their property, and another member of that Government immediately dropping it as if it burned his fingers. I imagine the honorable member for Totara, when he disclaimed this Bill, did not know that it had "Sir G. Grey" so distinctly printed on it; but, even without that brand, any one could see that it was one of the Grey measures. Notwithstanding the way in which this Bill was lauded as giving to every one everything he desired, we find it was to have no effect whatever for the next eight years. For five years we were to remain in this House, and then the next Parliament was only to sit for three years: consequently, before

this measure could have any operation, eight years might have passed, and eight years is a considerable period at the age to which the late Premier and myself have arrived. I am surprised that he has not, even for self-gratulation, endeavoured to get some of these measures into operation at an earlier period. I did not rise with any intention whatever of prolonging this debate. Whatever party may desire a speech for that purpose need not come to me, for I shall never take a part in what I consider a most disreputable proceeding—the wasting of time in talk instead of going on with business. I wish now to offer my vote. We have heard of a great many transactions of that kind under the rose, but, as I do not approve of such proceedings, I am prepared to offer my vote openly to-night to either party. We have heard this afternoon charges made by the honorable gentlemen who have just taken their seats on those benches. They have given the House to understand that they have something to reveal to the country which will show a disgraceful state of things; which will show that money has been wasted; which will show that no proper provision has been made to meet the expenditure of the country; which will show that the accounts of the country have been kept in a most disreputable manner; which will show that expenses have been wilfully and wantonly incurred which ought not to have been incurred. And yet, in the face of all these charges, the gentlemen who have just left those benches say, "Let us get back before you discover anything more." Why, Sir, a shop-boy would be ashamed of such a proceeding. A shop-boy, on hearing such accounts as these, would disdain to come back before the charges had been proved or refuted. Now, Sir, is it possible that a gentleman who has occupied positions which the Premier has occupied all his life should place himself in the position of demanding that his own friends should go on to those benches for the purpose of closing up all that has been done there for the last two years, instead of defying those honorable gentlemen, and saying, "You have brought these charges against me, and you shall stay there long enough to prove them; or you shall come back to this House and say you cannot prove them"? That is the position such a gentleman ought to take up; and if those gentlemen who have said so much as they have said to-night are not in a position to bring before the House something of the sort which they have said they can bring, then my vote goes against them if they have time and opportunity to do what they say they can do. If they will bring before the country a state of things such as they have given us to understand they are in a position to disclose, then I trust very few votes on either side of the House will go to restore the men who brought such a state of things upon the colony.

Mr. WAKEFIELD rose to speak after the voices had been given, when Mr. SPEAKER ruled that, being too late, he could not proceed.

Question put, "That this debate be adjourned," upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Mr. Saunders

Ayes	...	...	...	...	88
Noes	...	...	...	...	36
Majority for	...	...	...	...	2

AYES.

Mr. Andrews,	Mr. Pyke,
Mr. Ballance,	Mr. Reeves,
Mr. Barron,	Mr. Reid,
Mr. Brown,	Mr. Seddon,
Mr. Bunney,	Mr. Shephard,
Mr. De Lautour,	Mr. Shrimski,
Mr. Finn,	Mr. Speight,
Mr. J. B. Fisher,	Mr. Stewart,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,	Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Gisborne,	Mr. Tainui,
Sir G. Grey,	Mr. Tawhai,
Mr. Hamlin,	Major Te Wheore,
Major Harris,	Mr. Thomson,
Mr. Hislop,	Mr. Tole,
Mr. Hutchison,	Mr. Turnbull,
Mr. Ireland,	Mr. Reader Wood.
Mr. London,	
Mr. Macandrew,	
Mr. McDonald,	
Mr. Montgomery,	

Tellers.

Mr. George,
Mr. Sheehan.

NOES.

Mr. Acton Adams,	Mr. McLean,
Mr. Allwright,	Mr. Moorhouse,
Major Atkinson,	Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Bain,	Mr. Pitt,
Mr. Beetham,	Mr. Richmond,
Mr. Bowen,	Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Brandon,	Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Bryce,	Mr. Seymour,
Mr. Fulton,	Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Gibbs,	Mr. Sutton,
Mr. Hall,	Mr. Tomosana,
Mr. H. Hirst,	Colonel Trimble,
Mr. Hursthouse,	Mr. Wakefield,
Mr. Johnston,	Major Willis,
Mr. Kelly,	Mr. Wright.
Captain Kenny,	
Mr. Levin,	
Mr. Masters,	
Mr. McCaughan,	

Tellers.

Mr. Murray,
Mr. Whitaker.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Captain Colbeck,	Mr. Whyte,
Mr. W. J. Hurst,	Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Moss,	Mr. Dick,
Mr. Shanks,	Mr. Mason,
Dr. Wallis.	Mr. Driver.

The amendment was consequently agreed to.

Mr. HALL.—I think it right to explain that two gentlemen who are supporters of the Government are absent and are not paired. I now move, That the debate be adjourned until next sitting-day.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT.—I also wish to make a short explanation. The gentlemen on the Ministerial benches may take it for granted that because I voted with the Noes on the present occasion I shall be found voting with them on future occasions. I dare say some of my party thought it strange that I should vote with the

Noes, but I came here intending to vote for the Bills introduced by the Government, and I am determined to do so; but it is well that I should let the honorable gentlemen on the Government benches understand that when the motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers comes forward it is very possible that I shall vote for it.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—There is no objection to the adjournment of the debate until next sitting-day. It will be time to "pair" the absent members when they come back. We intend to give the new Government fair-play. Some honorable gentlemen seem to treat that remark derisively, and, if that is the spirit of the opposite side, it is possible that we may not give them fair-play. In the meantime, it is sufficient to say that we shall not oppose the adjournment till next sitting-day.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—When I was about to address the House just now, a number of members of the great Liberal party, as is their wont on all occasions, took the opportunity of stopping my mouth. With that fear of free speech which characterizes all their actions throughout the country, they objected to my expressing my views even upon so unimportant a question as the adjournment of the debate upon the second reading of a Bill. My honorable friend the member for Akaroa loudly cried out, "No, no; you cannot speak." Why the honorable gentleman should be afraid of me I cannot think. The honorable gentleman was in a state of the greatest perturbation. He seemed quite pale. He was in a panic. That terrible member for Geraldine was going to say something shocking about the honorable member for Akaroa. The honorable gentleman need not be afraid. I am not going to waste powder and shot upon such small deer. But I am entitled, by the forms of the House, to speak to the motion now before it, and I intend, by the grace of the great Liberal party, to express my views upon the question. I remember, during the debate on the want-of-confidence motion last session, hearing an honorable member in this House make a statement which struck me very much at the time, and which I long shall carry in my memory. It was the honorable member for the Thames (Sir George Grey). What he said was this: "If I find that I am beaten in the country during the general election I shall not wait for the meeting of the House, but I shall at once resign, in order that the new Ministry may have plenty of time to prepare their measures." I had often differed from the honorable gentleman in politics. I had, as honorable members of this House are aware, had some sharp passages of arms with him in this House. I had often been aggrieved at what I regarded as moral lapses on his part. But, when I heard him say that, I felt that we had a man of character and power among our statesmen. I felt that there was something in the honorable gentleman that I could admire. My heart warmed towards him when I heard him express so noble a sentiment as that. I thought, "Whatever we have thought of the honorable gentleman in the past, and however much we have differed from his political views, still he is setting an example to the public men of this country which ought to have a good effect, and

cannot but have a good influence on the country." I watched him with great interest as the elections went on, and when the general election was over I fully recognized that the result was so uncertain that the honorable gentleman could hardly be expected, under the circumstances, to resign before the House met. I fully agreed that he was quite justified in coming down to the House and allowing the issue to be put as an amendment on the Address in Reply. I in no way withdrew from him the admiration which had been excited in my breast by the noble sentiment he had expressed. But now, wonderful to think, after his express desire to give the new Ministry plenty of time to prepare their measures, when he has ascertained absolutely by the vote of the House that he is in a minority, and that the country is against him—

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Those honorable gentlemen from Auckland seem to me to be not aware of the forms of the House when they interrupt in this manner. They make such very odd noises, such curious sounds, that they are a little disconcerting. I was about to say, when I was interrupted by the noisy member for Auckland City East, that the honorable gentleman undoubtedly had his mind made up, by the last division on the amendment to the Address in Reply, that he was in a minority in this House; and then he resigned. I do not blame him for taking two or three days to do so. I have heard him blamed by some gentlemen who perhaps rather strain a constitutional point. I always believed he would resign in a becoming manner; and he did so. But, so far as his subsequent action is concerned, I say that he and those acting with him have not kept the word he gave to the House as regards giving the new Ministry plenty of time to prepare their measures. That is what I blame him and his friends for. The sentiment he expressed last session was a good one—a sound, patriotic, and statesmanlike one; but his action and that of his friends to-day is as bad, as unconstitutional, and as unpatriotic as the sentiment he then expressed was the reverse. Certainly there is one advantage in what has occurred to-day. That is, we have learned who is the leader of the Opposition for the day. I understand that the leadership of the Opposition has been placed in commission. Seven members, representing, I presume, the seven gentlemen who are to hold portfolios from the Crown, if successful in their present attempt—seven sham Ministers—have been appointed, and they, I understand, are to hold the position day by day in turn. Last sitting-day my honorable friend the member for Akaroa was leader, and I cannot say that he made a very promising figure; but I am not going to worry him. To-day, it seems, it is the honorable member for Port Chalmers who is leader of the Opposition. I think I noticed that one of the other leaders was a little jealous of his even taking the leadership for a day. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) was evidently very sore because the honorable member for Port Chalmers assumed the leadership even for his day, and I could not help admiring the manner in which the

honorable member for the Thames kept hiding behind the honorable gentleman. We could only see his head and spectacles over the shoulders of the honorable member for Port Chalmers, making the leader of the Opposition look like a double-headed nightingale. He was evidently prompting the honorable gentleman, and ultimately took the leadership out of his hands. The honorable gentleman (Mr. Sheehan) danced all over the House, and spoke from no less than three different places, taking the running out of the hands of the honorable member for Port Chalmers. I think that was rather severe on the honorable gentleman, who should have been allowed to have his day. They say every dog has his day, and I feel that every leader of the Opposition ought to have his day. I am glad, however, that the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) did snatch the leadership for the time being from the hands of the honorable member for Port Chalmers, because he has had considerable experience of circumstances such as these in which we stand to-day; and he has on former occasions taken considerable pains to instruct this House as to what the procedure ought to be. Before he fell into evil ways and neglected his parliamentary duties as he lately has done, he used to claim to be a great authority on parliamentary and constitutional practice; and I recollect very well that, on the last occasion when Ministers stood in the position in which Ministers now stand, the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) came down to the House and told us that everything seemed to be going wrong in Parliament now; that he could recollect a time—when he was younger—when such a thing would never have been permitted or attempted as an attack on Ministers before they got their measures before Parliament. He went on to show that really a proposition to interrupt the business of the country in order to force on a want-of-confidence motion before Ministers were ready for it was something perfectly preposterous. The honorable gentleman spoke very nicely on that occasion. He was always a very unselfish man, and was always thinking of others. I was very much struck on that occasion by the kindly thoughtfulness he had for those who might come after him. The circumstances were then exactly the same as at present, and the honorable gentleman then said,—

“If the honorable gentleman (Major Atkinson) wishes to bring forward his resolution, he must bring it on in the usual way. I contend that it would be out of order for him to attempt to bring a motion forward by intercepting the business on the Paper. It must be quite evident that, if such a thing were allowed to be done, or if it could be done, it would be impossible to proceed with the public business. We are not speaking for ourselves in this matter, or from any consideration of how far it will affect us; but we are considering this position: that any Government placed on these benches may be prevented from day to day bringing forward their business if it could be held that a motion of this kind could be brought forward at once, so as to intercept and suspend altogether the Government business.”

Mr. Wakefield

That was the opinion of the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) two years ago. We have heard what his opinions are to-day—that no violence that can be done to constitutional practice or to the rules of this House is too great for him, provided it interrupts public business and brings on a want-of-confidence motion before the time at which those honorable gentlemen choose to receive it. On a previous occasion he also spoke very strongly on the subject, especially with regard to honorable gentlemen not having been allowed to bring forward their measures. Speaking upon the Land Bill, he said,—

“If we remain in office the Bill will become law during the present session. The honorable member for Egmont has intimated his intention of moving a vote of want of confidence in the Government to-morrow, and it will come with very singular propriety, inasmuch as the present Government have as yet had no chance of putting their views before the House. As we have not had an opportunity of putting our measures before the House, I think it would be unwise to take a motion of such importance into consideration before proceeding to other business.”

That was the view taken by the honorable gentleman when on the Government benches. He then held that any attempt to force a motion of want of confidence on the Government by stopping public business, or even private business, was altogether wrong and out of order; and I ask whether the House can pay any attention to the arguments he brings forward to-day, when we are aware that such was his view—and the House confirmed that view—in 1877. On that occasion I entirely supported the contention of the honorable gentleman. I held then that he was quite right, and that the Government were perfectly justified in taking the course they did take; and I have never varied from that view. The honorable gentleman has gone half round the compass, and I have remained just where I was then. I maintain that the action taken by those honorable gentlemen is perfectly out of order and unconstitutional, and that the Government are perfectly right in taking no notice whatever of the motion of want of confidence, except such notice as they may please to take of it when they make up their minds how to treat it. Any attempt to intercept public business, such as adjourning the debate on this Bill, is really a mere act of obstruction. That is the point honorable gentlemen ought to consider. It amounts to this: The Grey Government have been turned out of office. They think that one or two members of the party who voted against them have since gone over to them—have changed their minds and gone against the present Government. They think that they are therefore justified in immediately moving a vote of want of confidence, and in turning out the new Ministry. But I say clearly they are not justified in doing anything of the kind. When men change their minds so easily, and go over, after having voted with us the other night, after having been at our caucuses, after actually attending the banquet we had after

the division, after having been in our confidence and giving us every intimation that honorable men can give that we were in their confidence,—their loyalty is not worth much. They may come back to-morrow for whatever consideration induced them to change their minds to-day. Are we to be told that there is a change of opinion in the House, that the Ministry are in a minority, and that they are not to be allowed even to come forward with their measures, because one gentleman of the character I have described has chosen to “wobble” across the floor of the House? It is perfectly nonsensical. He may wobble back again to-morrow, or he may wobble into oblivion in the course of the next few days, and never be heard of again this session. He may oscillate between two parties, as I have no doubt he will, until his political career comes, as it ought to come, to an ignominious termination. That is not the way to decide so important a question as the question whether the administration of this country is to be carried on in an efficient and honest manner, or whether it is to be carried on by a system of what I may be permitted to call a conglomeration of neglect and corruption. The question is in no wise to be settled in that manner. Let us look at what has happened. We had an up-hill fight during the previous session of Parliament, and the Government were defeated by an overwhelming majority. They got a dissolution under the most extraordinary circumstances: they got a dissolution under circumstances when it was hardly credible that any Ministry would have got a dissolution. Still, they got it, and they appealed to the country. All the influence of the Government was brought to bear upon the elections. They came back to this House, and were defeated. It has been said that the late Opposition did wrong in bringing forward their amendment on the very threshold of the first session of a new Parliament, before the Government had brought forward their policy. Does anybody really and sincerely believe that? Does even the most violent Greyite in the House believe that the Opposition acted wrongly in moving the amendment upon the Address in Reply? It was the only constitutional thing they could do. Having defeated the Government during the previous session, and having been sent by them to the constituencies to answer for their conduct, it was their constitutional duty to bring down an amendment upon the Address in Reply at the earliest possible moment. They had no other course to pursue. If we had been even sure of being beaten by a majority of twenty, it was still our duty to bring down that motion, take our beating, and go on with the business of the country. It was our duty as honorable men to do so, whatever the consequences might be. On the hustings I pledged myself to my constituents that my whole object in going back to Wellington was to turn out the Grey Ministry—that, if nobody else would do it, I should move an amendment to the Address in Reply which would have the effect of bringing that question to an issue at once. It was not a question of measures or of policy. We had their measures and their policy before the country for

two years, and we were not likely to get anything more than we had already. We knew that they had nothing more to present to us. We did perfectly right. And, then, what was the consequence? Some of those honorable gentlemen tell us that it is owing to the peculiar wording of the amendment to the Address in Reply that they now take this extraordinary course of arresting the progress of public business and obstructing the measures of the country whilst in the hands of the new Ministry. That is their story. Let us see what actually occurred. It has already been pointed out to the House, and honorable gentlemen must be aware of it, that any amendment to the Address in Reply is absolutely a vote of want of confidence, and that the Ministry must resign upon it. They do not reconstruct; they resign. The Premier must resign; and, if he goes, the whole Ministry must go with him. Any honorable gentleman who knows anything of constitutional government knows that the resignation of the Premier carries with it the resignation of the whole Ministry. And yet they complain that somebody—although who could have done it I am not aware—that somebody ought to have allowed the honorable gentleman to obtain a reconstruction within the ranks of his own Ministry or party. How was it possible that that could be done? The honorable gentleman had to resign because of the amendment to the Address in Reply. It is quite clear that this House indicated the honorable member for Selwyn as the person to be sent for by His Excellency to form a Ministry in consequence of that amendment having been carried. There is no doubt about that. My honorable friend accepted the task imposed upon him by the Governor of forming a Ministry. To them has been intrusted the responsibility of office; to them has been intrusted the duty of bringing before the Parliament, for the first time since the session of 1878, the state of the finances, and the state generally of the public business. I might refer to the only instance in my knowledge in New Zealand of a vote like this being carried. That was in 1866, when my honorable friend the member for Ashley carried a resolution in this House that the Ministry as then constituted did not possess the confidence of the House. What occurred on that occasion? The honorable member for Ashley was sent for. The honorable gentleman the member for the Thames was then Governor; and I believe that a very amusing scene took place. They walked up and down the garden for a couple of hours before the Governor raised the question at all of the formation of a Ministry. What did the honorable member for Ashley do? He did not ask for a reconstruction of the Ministry. He advised the Governor to send for Mr. Stafford.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I really do not think these matters have anything to do with the question now under discussion.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I was under the impression that they were, through your allowing me to enter upon the subject at all.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I allowed the honorable member to proceed, in the hope that he might

show what bearing the matters he was referring to had upon the subject under discussion, which he has not yet done.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I submit to your ruling, Sir. I am glad to have interested you so much that you have listened to me for so long a time without having interrupted me. If I have gone somewhat beyond the question I am very sorry. I think I shall be able to go back in a few moments. I may simply point out my reason for referring to a matter so remote as this. My only reason was to show that there was no obstruction of public business. There was no desire on that occasion to turn out the Ministry at all. The intention of the Legislature was to get rid of the Premier, and go on as before with the remaining colleagues and one or two more. I was going on to say that the honorable gentlemen on those benches have undoubtedly been intrusted with the powers of the Crown, and they are not going to give up—to surrender—the responsibility imposed upon them, simply because honorable gentlemen carry a catch division for an adjournment on the second reading of a Bill. Nothing of the sort. As a matter of fact, if we had all our friends here, all the members of our party, we should have carried this motion. Why are the honorable gentlemen opposite so anxious to have this debate adjourned? Why are they so anxious to bring on their motion of want of confidence at the earliest possible moment? Simply for this reason: They know full well that, if the Government are allowed to sit on those benches for a week, the majority that the Opposition boast of now, and boast of wrongly, will be gone. Does anybody believe that, if those honorable gentlemen in opposition were likely to have a majority in this House—if they could depend upon having a majority in a fortnight hence—they would take the course they have now pursued? Why, of course not. They would say to the Government, "We will give you the fullest fair-play. Make your Financial Statement; do as much work as you can: you will save us a great deal of trouble; bring in our Bills, pass all our Electoral Bills; do all you can; we will give you the fullest fair-play: as soon as you do all this, we, with the majority at our command, will then turn you out of office." That is what they would have said and done. But I am convinced that the independence of honorable gentlemen will assert itself, and that the Government will be placed in a position to enable them to carry on the public business, at all events during the remainder of the session. The honorable members opposite know it. Although I grieve to think it, I have a suspicion that one other reason why they object to go on promptly with the business is, that they are afraid of the disclosures the Government will make. I watched the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) very closely to-day, and I have learned to judge pretty fairly as to what is in his mind by his action and his speech; and, if the honorable gentleman is not weighed very heavily upon by some such consideration as that, then my penetration of character is not worth much. I am convinced in my own mind that those honorable gentlemen are afraid of the disclosures they think my honorable friends will make. They

Mr. Speaker

will do anything to avoid that. They will resort to any trick to prevent those honorable gentlemen getting sufficiently firmly seated on those benches to disclose to this House the true state of the public affairs, and the true position of the public finances. I am perfectly satisfied that such is the case. If it were really a mere question of party, they would have no objection to those honorable gentlemen holding their seats for a while longer, and would then bring on their motion of want of confidence in due course, when the Government must accept it and bring the question to an issue. What they want is to shake the Government in their seats before they fairly sit down, and prevent them from bringing before the House anything that would be of any importance. I do not pretend to be in the confidence of my honorable friends opposite, but they are not the men I take them to be if they are going to be jockeyed by any such trick as that. They have a heavy responsibility resting upon them—a responsibility which the whole country recognizes—and they would be failing in their duty to themselves, failing in their duty to the Crown, failing in their duty to every member of their party, if they budged from those benches until they had discharged the duty they owe to those who placed them in power, and the duty they owe to the country. Let the Opposition bring down their no-confidence motions and carry them. If I were one of the Ministry no power on earth could move me. I would not move until I had done my legitimate duty to this House. Do you think, if they did succeed in obtaining a majority, they could carry on the business? If by breaking a pair, or resorting to some such trick as that, they really obtained a majority, do you believe they would be able to go on with the business? The honorable member for Selwyn is not the man to remain in office longer than is necessary; he is not the man to cling to office against an adverse vote of this House. He has taken that place, as I am fully aware, at great personal sacrifice to himself, and with very great unwillingness; and nothing, I am perfectly certain, but a strong sense of duty would induce him to remain there a single day longer than he considered absolutely necessary. If the honorable gentlemen, the seven leaders of the Opposition, be agreed to make up a majority consisting of honorable gentlemen who have no mind of their own, who have no conscience of their own, then of course they are bound to turn the Government out in time, because the Government will not attempt to hold office simply for the sake of holding office. They will hold office simply that they may have an opportunity of bringing their measures before Parliament, and entirely disclosing to the country the real state of its affairs. And they are perfectly justified in doing so by parliamentary precedent, by constitutional practice, by self-respect, and by every other consideration that ought to weigh with gentlemen in their position. I do hope we shall not see this course of obstruction carried to any great length. If we do, we cannot help it. There are men in this House who have power of endurance and some knowledge of party tactics, and I venture to say that we shall see both their endu-

rance and their knowledge of party tactics exercised to the utmost. The Opposition will not be allowed to prevent the Government carrying their measures, or to stop public business by mere factious obstruction, and by what I very much fear is mere greed of office. They think, I suppose—they told us in this House—that they could put a Ministry in which could carry on the public business on Tuesday.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member is discussing the want-of-confidence motion, and going beyond the immediate question before the House.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I admit that I have transgressed a little, Sir. Perhaps I was carried away slightly by my feelings. I will not encroach again, and shall sit down in the course of a very few minutes. All I will say is this: that I have observed with real regret that honorable gentlemen who have obtained in this House a high reputation for political ability and political character have lent themselves to a proceeding which is in reality nothing but pure obstruction. There was an opportunity to-night to get the Triennial Parliaments Bill passed—to get it absolutely passed and done with. It might have gone to the Legislative Council to-night, and I did grieve to see—I am not a bit surprised to see some honorable gentlemen, the honorable member for Tuapeka, the honorable member for Rodney, and some of those honorable gentlemen, act in this way: of course it is their cue to do this kind of thing—but, Sir, there are honorable gentlemen in this House whom I am grieved to find lending themselves to anything of the sort, because they will be ashamed and sorry for it afterwards, whatever the issue may be. Party lines are not so marked in this country yet that honorable gentlemen can afford to lend themselves to proceedings of this kind, merely for a momentary attack on those who are in opposition to them at the time; and I was grieved to find that there could be found so large a party in this House who would lend themselves to such proceedings as we have seen to-night. I was glad to see an honorable gentleman like the honorable member for Lyttelton have the courage and independence to act as he pleased. I felt that his explanation was scarcely necessary, because nobody, certainly not myself, ever supposed for a moment that his vote to-night meant anything more than a desire to follow honestly the line he pledged himself to at the hustings, and to vote for the Triennial Parliaments Bill. I should no more have thought of taking advantage of the vote he gave to suggest to him, or in any way to assume, that he was one of my party than I would have done anything else that was improper. I certainly admired the honorable gentleman's conduct to-night; and I say this: that, if there had been two or three other gentlemen in the House who would have done as he did, and acted according to their conscience instead of following a very doubtful leader, the Bill by this time would have been as good as law—a Bill which everybody wants to see passed, but which has been seriously imperilled by the obstructive and disorderly action of those honorable gentlemen.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I am not going to answer the honorable member for Geraldine; and I will tell you why, Sir. Because a respected member of this House assures me he is unanswerable. The honorable member for Bruce assures me positively that he is unanswerable; and when a gentleman of the keen perception of the honorable member for Bruce gives me that assurance I may take it for granted that there is a good deal of truth in it. But, before proceeding further, I may be allowed to say that I am very much pleased indeed that, whatever this debate may have failed to do, it has accomplished one thing: it has made the honorable member for Bruce take a side at last—it has supplied some reason why he should take a side. I do not know whether it is the introduction of a Drainage Bill that will satisfy him, or anything of that nature; but certain it is that he has taken a side at last; and he has receded from the position of holding the balance so evenly that it was impossible to know where he was going to throw the straw that would turn it. Therefore it is satisfactory to have done with that, because one now knows exactly what position to take up. I think the honorable gentleman's assurance to me is correct, that the honorable member for Geraldine is unanswerable. But, Sir, will you permit me to say that, notwithstanding the fact that the honorable member for Geraldine sits on the opposite side of the House to me at the present time, I look upon him to a very large extent as being an excellent model for some of those young members who are constantly being appealed to? I say, in some respects; and I also say that the honorable member for Geraldine is a glaring example of the evils which young members may rush into if they imitate him. If I might speak my mind straight out with regard to the present position, I would say, "A plague o' both your houses." You are simply discussing the question of who is to go out of office and who is to step into office, and you are—at least on this occasion one side is—afraid to discuss that question by a solid vote. Now, I will say, irrespective of party considerations, that my idea of the position is this: If honorable gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House are sincere in the statement they make that they desire that the business of the country should be proceeded with, let them consent to have the no-confidence motion disposed of. The honorable member for Geraldine tells us that what is now the Opposition should give the new Government a fair chance. To do what, Sir? To mutilate and to maul the measures introduced by other people into this House—to put them in such a state that their own fathers and sponsors would not know them—to put those Bills in such a position that when they emerge from this House the people will look at them and say, "What have we gained by their passage?" Is that the chance the honorable members want? If so, I trust it is a chance this House will never give to any Ministry. But the honorable gentleman takes for granted one thing which I think is not admitted by those who look a little deeper. He takes it for granted that all those things which he and other members have been quoting as exactly

analogous to the present position are analogous. Now, I am not thoroughly versed in parliamentary matters, but I am a little versed in regard to the present position, and I say it is this: that honorable members come down and table an amendment to the Address in reply to the Governor's Speech—an amendment which, on its face, bears this impress: "We want a reconstruction of the present Ministry"—an amendment which, apart from what it bears on its face, was distinctly framed in order to gain votes, and which did gain votes in consequence of its being so framed; and an amendment which, having been proved to be false in the promise which was held out, lost the votes of those who formerly voted for it. I think that that is the starting-point to go from, and, until we take that starting-point, we are not in a position to judge of the results with regard to voting hereafter. Honorable members may think that it is a perfectly dignified course to adopt to speak of other honorable gentlemen, who give their votes as conscientiously and as honestly as they do, as "wobbling" across the floor of this House. I said at the beginning of my remarks that I was anxious to take the honorable member for Geraldine as a model; but I do trust that, whatever model we young members in this House may follow, it will not be one that lays down such a very injurious course. I do not think that, because an honorable gentleman in this House chooses to record his vote in a certain way, he should be open to such a statement and such an insinuation as that he was prepared to "wobble" back again. The honorable gentleman objects to the course which is being pursued by the Opposition. Why? Because, he says, they have got no leader, or, having a leader for to-day, that leader is not there to-morrow. I wish to hold out an inducement to the honorable gentleman—an inducement of a character which, I think, will have full weight with him, and that is, that he ought to join our party as quickly as possible in the hope that that dog "will have its day." If these honorable gentlemen are to be leaders for a day, perhaps there may be an opening for the honorable gentleman in the same capacity. All I can say is that, if those honorable gentlemen he named have a following, the tail that will follow the honorable member for Geraldine will be very small indeed. I may further say that, if the honorable gentleman opposite means to infer, or to lead this House to believe, that the Opposition are in a disorganized state, he never made a greater mistake in his life. If he means to infer that there are divided counsels, he makes a great mistake. If he tells the House that, he is leading honorable members into an error—an error which, I think, will be proved, not to his entire satisfaction, but to his entire conviction, before many days are over his head. I will not lay claim to that keenness of perception which can see right through a man, as the honorable gentleman does. He states that he watched the late Native Minister and saw exactly what was passing through that honorable gentleman's mind in consequence of the different positions which he has taken up in the House to-day—first in

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one place and then in another. I would like to ask, if some great seer were to look through the honorable member for Geraldine, what he would think of the change of opinion which that honorable gentleman has expressed on the different subjects which have been discussed in this House, and what he would think of the position he has taken with regard to party government in this country—having stood behind one party to-day and being prepared to support another party to-morrow. It appears to me his proper place is in opposition, and, though he supports the Government at the present time, I believe ultimately he will be found in opposition, no matter what Government is in power. And I say, Long may he continue so. I believe he is a most useful, able, and active member of Opposition, and it would be one of the greatest mistakes he ever made in his life for him to support the Government. I hope he will see the matter in that light, and will devote the abilities he possesses to criticising clearly and fully, and by no means in a friendly manner, the action of every Government that comes into power. He objects to certain honorable members having such easy consciences that they can "wobble" across the floor of this House from opposite sides to those to which they had "wobbled" before. And why? Because they had done outrage to their consciences by voting against gentlemen at whose festive board they had sat on the occasion of a certain party spread. Well, it is too bad, when you look at it, that honorable gentlemen should go and sit under their mahogany and hob-nob with them, and then vote against them! Really, I put it to honorable members, is it not too bad? All I say is, that I hope that on any future occasion those honorable gentlemen will feel it incumbent upon them to call their people round them and analyze the characters of the guests they invite to their festive board, in order to see if it is possible that they may "wobble" into the Opposition lobby afterwards. But it appears to me that, when honorable gentlemen appeal to such a low standard, and say that, because a man has eaten at the board of another man, therefore he is to vote with him when appealed to—when honorable gentlemen do that, they are driven to the last resource to catch votes. It appears to me, furthermore, that it would have been much better, and certainly much more politic, if the honorable gentlemen had waited until the victory was secured, and had afterwards had their enjoyment over the festive board. But, under present circumstances, honorable gentlemen must not feel aggrieved if not only one or two, but half-a-dozen, are to be found, when the next want-of-confidence motion comes on, in the Opposition lobby, who have sat at the festive board with them; and I trust a number of those honorable gentlemen who are in that position will not be frightened or intimidated in the least by the threat held out by the honorable member for Geraldine, but will honestly do their duty to the country and to the constituencies who sent them here. Now we have to deal in this transaction with what is called "constitutional government." It appears that whenever a man wants a

nice-sounding term with regard to these things he applies that of "constitutional government." You may mean one thing by it, and honorable gentlemen on the other side may mean quite another thing: therefore it is a perfectly safe expression. With regard to the present dispute, or the present contest, it appears to me it is not a question of constitutional government, but a question of sound common sense with a large number of members; and I put it in this light to the common sense of honorable members: Is it reasonable that a Ministry which has taken its place on those benches through a false representation of the ultimate intentions of those who proposed the amendment by which it gained its place, is to be permitted to fortify itself in the stronghold of office, when it does not possess the confidence of this House? It appears to me that members have only got to look at the thing just for a moment, and they must see it in this light: that, were the Opposition to permit those gentlemen to strengthen and solidify themselves upon those seats, they would not be doing their duty to the country. I will tell you why. The reason is this: that the struggle for the permanent possession of those benches is to be fought out after this debate is closed. Therefore it is all nonsense for members to throw hints out that this measure must be forced through, and everything else put on one side. That Bill is not in the slightest danger of being lost, if honorable members on that side of the House mean what they say, because members of the Opposition are sincere in their desire that that Bill shall be made law this session. I believe some honorable gentlemen desire to get home as quickly as possible: if, however, members are not prepared to come here and carry out in a legitimate manner the business of the country, they ought to say so to their constituents; but those of us who are not prepared to shunt the business, but are prepared to stand by to the last and do the work, ought to have none of those threats held out to us. The Colonial Treasurer told us plainly that, if things were to go on in this manner, these Bills would never be passed: in other words, if they are forced into the position into which we shall at once force them, they will offer opposition which cannot be overcome. Well, I say no member ought to be influenced by such threats as that. Let us come here to do our duty, and let us do it honestly, intelligently, and faithfully, no matter at what sacrifice of time to ourselves personally. An honorable member opposite says we have resorted, or have attempted to resort, or desire to resort, to snatch divisions, and that we have broken pairs. Well, I am led to believe that one of the most important things in this House is the honor of its members—that, if members make a certain agreement, of necessity that agreement must be kept at all hazards, whatever be the effect to party. Now, I take the references of the honorable member opposite to be to the case of the honorable member for Wairarapa, and, if he means to infer that there was any attempt on the part of that member of the Opposition to break his pair in that case, he is stating that which is not the fact. I was present when the

honorable gentleman with whom he paired distinctly stated his intention of being present at the division to-night; and I think it is altogether ungenerous, and calculated to have a most injurious effect upon the arrangements made by members of this House, if these unfounded aspersions are to be levelled at honorable members. The honorable member for Geraldine ought not to have made the assertion he did make.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Perhaps I may be allowed to say the honorable member does not know what he is talking about. I referred to another matter altogether, and the honorable member is entirely wrong.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—That is the only case that has occurred this session that I am aware of. Of course, if the honorable gentleman says he did not mean that, it must be so. The honorable gentleman further says we want a smart division. Of course we do. And why do we want it? Not for the reason the honorable gentleman assigns. The honorable gentleman thinks that what is now an assured majority will melt into a minority if the time be taken up. But will that be so? The members of the party of which I am but a humble unit hold a different opinion. No amount of insinuations with regard to corrupt practices the proofs of which are said to be contained in those mysterious pigeon-holes will weigh with any one who wishes to do his duty—no amount of mud-throwing will blacken, unless the mud is made to stick. Unless these honorable gentlemen are in a position to prove the charges they make they have no right to make them, and, once having made them, woe betide those making the charges if they do not in some measure substantiate them. There is not a man who has a seat in this House who would not condemn them: but that is not the only condemnation from which they will have to suffer. To cast aspersions upon the character of those who have held office for the past two years, by accusing them of being guilty of the conduct which is covertly imputed to them, must recoil upon the accusers if these assertions are not proved. There is not an honorable member of this House who would not regret the proceedings of men who could stoop so low; but not only that, instant condemnation would fall upon them throughout the country at large. Furthermore, I do not think it is calculated to encourage that public spirit, that spirit which should characterize our public men—and there are men of high principle on both sides of the House—if such aspersions are cast out without any attempt being made to prove them; and certainly it does not become honorable gentlemen who profess to be able to teach us young members what our duty ought to be to throw out such insinuations without attempting to prove that their charges are well grounded. The honorable gentleman made one other assertion, with which I must agree. He said that, if he occupied a position on the Government benches, no motion which the Opposition could bring forward would stir him from those seats until he pleased. I believe him; but I do hope that, whatever mistake this House may

make, it will never make the mistake of putting any men there who seek to obtain office and keep in office because they have a certain object that they wish to carry out. It appears to me that when Ministers, having been defeated by a small majority, took the course of tendering their resignations to the Governor, and when the new Ministry was not reconstructed upon the lines clearly laid down by the House for its reconstruction, it is quite proper that that new Ministry should be met by a vote of no-confidence, and that that vote should be disposed of either in their favour or against them. Until that is done, it is utterly impossible that any business can be done, and the sooner a conclusion is come to the better for members, and the sooner the session will be closed. I can only conclude by thanking the honorable gentleman for the splendid example which he gives us as young statesmen. I am much obliged to him in that respect. But, at the same time, I must add that we have studied too carefully the antecedents of the honorable gentleman to follow his precepts in all things.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not rise to reply to the speech we have just heard. We have had a very handsome lecture read to the House by a very young member—one of those gentlemen who, the honorable member for Christchurch City led us to believe, were to be such an ornament to the House. I am glad the House has had the opportunity of listening to the honorable gentleman and forming an opinion of him. He has been paraded to us as one of the great examples of the “working-man” who are coming down here to improve matters so greatly; but I think that in his speech to-night he has made a great mistake, and that he will be known in future as the “talking-man.” There is one great mistake he made, which did not originate with him. It came first from the honorable member for Totara, but the honorable member for Auckland City East has repeated it; and this is the statement I wish to refer to. It is this: that the motion carried at the instance of my honorable friend the Premier distinctly pointed to a reconstruction of the late Ministry; that the House adopted it with the intention that the Ministry should be reconstructed; and that, therefore, as there has been no reconstruction, this Ministry does not satisfy the conditions of the vote of the House. Let me answer that statement in this way: If there was any one declaration from the late occupants of the Ministerial benches which was more emphatic than another, which was more unqualified than another, it was that the late Ministry would be parties to no reconstruction. The House carried the resolution in the face of that well-remembered declaration, that no members of that Ministry would assist in any reconstruction.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Coalition.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—They would admit neither of coalition nor reconstruction; and at the meeting of members of the party this resolution was come to: that there should be neither one nor the other. That was distinctly understood, and I absolutely deny that any man gave his vote in the dark, or in the belief that there would be any reconstruction.

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tion of the old Ministry. It was thoroughly well known that, if that resolution was carried, the necessary consequence would be that the leader of the party who proposed that resolution would be sent for, and that he must construct a Ministry. There is one other thing I should like to refer to: indeed, it was mainly to refer to this that I rose. The honorable member for Auckland City East has taken upon himself to speak of the honorable member for Bruce in a way in which no member who has not spent his first session in the House should speak of an old member. I have worked with the honorable member for Bruce on both sides of the House for many years past, and I say that there is not a better party man in the House than the honorable member for Bruce. I am aware that there is always a great difficulty in reconciling party obligations with individual feelings and opinions, especially when a young member comes into the House; but this I say: that no member in the House has more consistently and conscientiously exercised his own judgment, and at the same time complied with party obligations, than the honorable member for Bruce. And yet we are told, by an honorable member who has scarcely made his appearance in the House, that the honorable member for Bruce does not know his own mind, and is capable of changing his opinion without any occasion whatever.

Mr. STEWART.—I had hoped that the proceedings of this Parliament would be carried on with that courtesy and gentlemanly conduct which have hitherto characterized it; but I regret very much to notice that the honorable member for Geraldine has adopted a course which will not tend to perpetuate good feeling in the House. Such a speech as his can only be accounted for by supposing it to be a post-prandial speech; and, if we are to take his dictum as to what is to be the proper rule of conduct, where are we to go for his successor? The honorable gentleman has presumed to dictate to members of this House the latchet of whose shoes he is unworthy to loose; he has dictated a course that shows clearly this: that he can become a zealous advocate of one side of the House because those on the other side have not been able properly to recognize his merits. He finds himself in this position, that, if he deserts the party with which he is at present connected, he is nowhere. That is his position. He must remain where he is, or sink into oblivion. I always find, Sir, that, no matter how very ably, how very seriously, and how very satisfactorily the debates in this House are carried on, after some adverse vote is carried there is a species of buffoonery indulged in with a view to break the fall, and some gentleman is introduced for the purpose of acting the appropriate part. We have been treated to-night to a scene of that kind; but, though the remarks made were uttered no doubt with a view to provoking some discussion, and perhaps to producing some irritation of feeling, I am not going to allow it to warp my better judgment by now declaring that I shall do this, that, or something else, because an insulting speech has been made affecting the character of any honorable gentleman. And now with regard to myself. On the present occasion my course is perfectly satis-

factory to my conscience, perfectly satisfactory to the judgment of my friends whose opinions I respect, and ultimately will be satisfactory to the intelligent and thinking men in the House. What did I come here for? Did I not tell my constituents that I came here for a special purpose—a particular purpose—and that was to oust, if possible, a very distinguished statesman, Sir George Grey, in whose administrative ability I had no confidence? I respected, as I told my constituents, the distinguished services which that statesman had rendered the British nation, and I always regarded him as a gentleman whose character was in every respect unassailable. All I said, and now state openly, was that I had no confidence in that gentleman's administrative ability. I may be right or I may be wrong in that opinion. Subject to that qualification, I told my constituents that I was prepared to support the honorable gentleman who has given notice of a vote of no-confidence; and is it to be said that, because I independently carry out the line of action I declared to my constituents, I am doing something that is open to doubt? When I came here I attended no caucus meetings of the present Government party; I was not consulted as to the amendment moved to the Address in Reply; and I do not wish to commit myself in any way as to any future conduct I may think proper to pursue. I shall exercise an independent discretion as to what course I shall take in the future. Now, what was that vote of want of confidence? It was a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry as then constituted. What was the logical conclusion to be drawn from the motion? It was this: that honorable members were fairly entitled to expect that an effort would be made to reconstruct that Ministry; and is it to be said that, because I voted with that party in order to accomplish the avowed purpose for which I came to this House, I am to be tied to the gentlemen with whom I voted on that occasion through the whole of their career? I claim for myself that the moment that the vote was carried I was perfectly free in every respect to select from this House any gentleman whom I could follow with confidence; and to suppose that I must act the part of some jackal in blindly following a certain gentleman is simply to suppose that I could be guilty of a thing of which I should be ashamed. I do not wish, of course, to allow my feelings to carry me away in any way by saying anything which, on more mature reflection, I might regret; but this I do say: that the present Premier, I think, ought fairly to have endeavoured to bring about what was really intended by that amendment—that he ought to have made some effort to carry out that resolution; and that, had he failed in doing so, his duty was to tell His Excellency the Governor that he was unable to carry out the resolution of the House. I may submit to this House, without saying anything whatever reflecting on the present Premier, that I think any one in his position would have said, "Your Excellency, you have sent for me; I am unable to give effect to this amendment; and I now tender you the commission which you

gave me;" and then His Excellency would have been entitled to communicate with any gentleman in this House whom he thought worthy of its confidence. But what do we find?—that the Premier (Mr. Hall) wrongly conceived that that resolution entitled him, without consulting the House or getting an explanation from His Excellency, to select a Ministry of his own choice; and, if he has chosen such a Ministry, he must stand the consequences. If the Ministry of his choice does not possess the confidence of the House, the House is clearly entitled to pass a vote of want of confidence on the question. I do not know that I need refer to anything further, beyond this: that a good deal has been said about constitutional law. Every person seems to be well versed in constitutional law; they quote Todd, and suppose all the knowledge in the world on the subject is in that book. Now, I venture to say this: that, whatever authorities may be brought before this House—something like seventy or eighty years old—they are not to be taken as absolutely binding on the House. The principle throughout all these precedents I take to be this: that the voice of a representative Assembly of the people is the supreme voice; and that whatever expression of opinion this Assembly gives His Excellency, he, as the representative of Her Majesty, will give effect to, without inquiring whether that resolution has been come to on sufficient grounds or not. This Assembly I take to be the representative Assembly of the people. The Executive are the mere agents of this Assembly; and, if the Assembly has no confidence in its agents, it is entitled at any time to withdraw its authority, and say, "We shall no longer intrust you with the power attaching to your office," and confer the power upon some other gentlemen. That seems to me to be the proper solution of the question. And to say that this Ministry, or any other Ministry, is to remain in office in defiance of the express wish of this House is to use threats, I think, which will not meet with the approbation of this House, or of any other representative Assembly. His Excellency is no doubt entitled to select a gentleman from this House to construct a Ministry, but it is always upon the assumption that that Ministry will prove satisfactory to the House; and, if it is not satisfactory, this House will not hesitate to express its opinion on that question. Sir, I was extremely grieved to hear threats of that kind held out—threats which may be fortified by some extraneous rumours as to what will be done in respect to the honorable gentlemen opposite holding their seats. I say that no Ministry can constitutionally occupy seats on those benches for any time after the House has given expression of its want of confidence in them.

Mr. MURRAY.—Sir, I did not intend to take part in this debate; but reference has been made to me by the honorable member for Auckland City East. That honorable member is a fair specimen of the class he represents—members who support persons instead of principles, and oppose men rather than measures. I am not going to be drawn by the honorable member into this very irregular debate; and I regret, Sir, that

you should have permitted one honorable member to so far forget and transgress the rules of Parliament as to introduce matters so foreign, and thus cause the unfortunate discussion which has taken place to-day, and which was altogether irrelevant to the question—namely, the second reading of the Triennial Parliaments Bill. All I trust is, that this will be prevented on future occasions. I will take another opportunity to vindicate my position, when the question of a vote of want of confidence is before the House; but I think my consistency will not be called in question by any honorable member who has experience of me in this House.

Mr. MACANDREW.—The House has unmistakably expressed its opinion that this debate should be adjourned until Tuesday. I think it had better be so. On this side of the House, we do not wish to waste further time, and I hope the House will allow the adjournment to take place at once. In the meantime, the Government may think better of it, and on Tuesday allow us to bring forward the motion of want of confidence. No time should be lost. That must come, and will come, and the sooner the better.

Debate adjourned till Tuesday.

The House adjourned at half-past nine o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 14th October, 1879.

First Reading—New Member—Ministerial Statement—
Railway Contracts—Audit of Public Companies
Accounts—Timber Imports.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Awatere Shearing Reserve Bill.

NEW MEMBER.

The Hon. Mr. F. WHITAKER was introduced, and took the oath.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER.—Sir, I desire to make to the Council a short statement explaining the position I am in as regards the Government, and also the position the Government is in. The Council no doubt is well aware that during the last week the Ministry of which Sir George Grey was Premier went out of office, that the Hon. Mr. Hall was sent for by His Excellency to form a Government, and that he has done so. Mr. Hall himself is Premier; I am Attorney-General; Major Atkinson is Treasurer; Mr. Rolleston, Minister of Education and Justice, and holding other offices as well; Mr. Bryce, Minister for Native Affairs; and Mr. Oliver, Minister for Public Works. Such is the Ministry in office at the present time. There is one vacant portfolio, and also a vacancy in the Executive Council. These would have been filled up before this, but, as matters stand, it would perhaps not be a

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pleasant thing to offer to any gentleman a seat under such circumstances as those which at present exist, and therefore, until something definite is done in another place, the offices will not be filled up. Although I have to-day been introduced into this Council, at the same time I may say it is not the first time I have held a seat here. I was one of the first members of the Legislative Council of New Zealand. In 1853, Sir George Grey, being then Governor of New Zealand, appointed the Hon. Mr. Swainson, the Hon. Captain Kenny (now Colonel Kenny), and myself as the first three members of this Council. Colonel Kenny, I am sorry to say, is in such a state of health as not to be able to take his seat during this session. Mr. Swainson objects to travelling by sea, and it is quite probable that the Council will not again see him sitting here. Therefore I am the only one of the three now in the Council—how long I may be here I do not know. Our appointments were dated May, but before the first sitting of the Council was held a number of other members were appointed. Some of them I see now in the Council—the Hon. Major Richmond and the Hon. Sir Francis Dillon Bell. All the other members of that first Council are now absent, some being out of the colony, and many dead. Although I have to-day been introduced as a new member, really I am what may be termed renovated, for I previously for some years represented the Government in the Legislative Council. During that time I endeavoured to conduct the business of the Council satisfactorily, and I appeal to my honorable friends who were then in the Council with me whether I did not conduct the business satisfactorily. At any rate, I never had any unpleasantness with the Speaker, with the Council, or with any member of it. The business was conducted so far satisfactorily then, and I hope that I shall be able to conduct the business now in a manner which shall be satisfactory to the Council. I am aware that the other day an honorable gentleman who is sitting opposite—the Hon. Colonel Whitmore—took some exception to my appointment. Well, it may have been reasonable, but when I explain the circumstances which led to my appointment he will see that I have stopped gaps which could not otherwise have been stopped, and that therefore my appointment was, as it were, necessary. In the first place, it was necessary that the Government should have a representative in this Council. So far as the duty of representing the Government in the Council is concerned, no doubt there are gentlemen in the Council better able to do that than I am; but there were special qualifications required. It was necessary that the representative should come from the northern part of the colony—from Auckland, in fact. No other member of the Government comes from that part of the country, and it was considered that I should be a reasonable representative in that respect. My honorable friend Dr. Pollen no doubt would have filled the position so far; but, unfortunately, there was another qualification required, which was that the member of the Government in the Council should be a lawyer, inasmuch as he had to take the position of

Attorney-General. There was no member of the Council who united these three qualifications, although in other respects there are plenty of members of the Council who could have filled the position much better than I can hope to do; and therefore the Government thought it very desirable that I should be appointed to the Council to represent the Government here, and to act as Attorney-General. I hope my honorable friend opposite will be satisfied with this explanation, because I should be sorry to have any exception taken to me expressly by him. However, looking at the position I have occupied already, and having known him for a great many years, I have no doubt we shall get on very well together. I am quite sure my honorable friend did not mean anything personal to myself—I am certain he did not desire to be personally offensive in his objection, because, all the years we have known each other, though differences of political opinion have occurred, we have never had a difference of an unpleasant nature. I only hope that he will be as satisfied with my coming to the Council as I am satisfied to see him sitting over there. Having made this personal explanation, I think it is but right that I should inform the Council as to the course which the Government intend to take with regard to public business. Honorable members are no doubt perfectly aware that, for some considerable time past—that is to say, for the last two or three years—a great deal has been said about liberal measures in the way of electoral reform. Promises have been made by various Governments from time to time that certain liberal measures should be introduced. Such measures have occasionally been introduced into Parliament, but they have fallen through from one reason or another. I am not going to describe the way in which the different measures have come to grief, but I may say this: that matters stand in exactly the same position now as they have done for years past, and, notwithstanding all promises that have been made, the electoral law of the colony has not been placed on a proper footing. Very early in the history of this colony—as long ago as 1858—I assumed to myself the position of being a reformer of the electoral laws, and I prepared a number of Bills for that purpose. Some were rejected by the Council, some by the House, and some became law. I then endeavoured to point out to the Council that the legislation I proposed was in the direction in which legislation must one day or another go—that it was no use putting it off, for such legislation would inevitably come to pass—that we had a democratic Constitution, and we should deal with it in that view. As to the measures I proposed, whether they were or whether they were not accepted then, they must be accepted some day or another. During the last few years I think that the prediction I then announced to this Council has been entirely fulfilled. Part of the electoral reforms then proposed have been granted. There have been extensions of the franchise: but still a very great deal remains to be done; and I trust that, when the Council comes to deal with such measures as the pre-

sent Government will bring forward, they will bring to their consideration a liberal spirit. Immediately upon arriving in Wellington, having arrived only on Saturday, I devoted my attention to the matter for the purpose of putting the electoral measures on a proper footing. I am happy to say that I have completed the various measures which I think are required, and that, with one or two exceptions, they are printed, and will in the course of the day be distributed amongst members of both branches of the Legislature. The first measure to be considered will be in the direction of repealing the whole of the electoral law at present in existence, so that in fresh legislation we may reduce our law to narrow limits. At present the law governing electoral matters extends over twenty or thirty Acts; and I must confess that, though a lawyer, and experienced as I am in these matters, I find it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain under what particular Act particular steps are to be taken, when the Acts of Parliament under which we proceed extend over twenty-three or twenty-four years, and are exceedingly numerous in themselves. I think it would be desirable that our legislation on this subject should be confined within as narrow a compass as possible; and a measure has been prepared, under the direction of the Government, by myself for the purpose of repealing all these laws. Then we come to the question of what laws are to be passed in their place. One of a very important character is that which deals with the question of the franchise. A great deal has been said and written upon this subject during the last few years, and, to a great extent, persons and parties have been in accord as to what direction new legislation should take. I may be allowed to say that the Government are perfectly agreed as to what measures they will submit to the House—these measures, of course, being submitted to the other branch of the Legislature first, as they are more applicable to the House of Representatives than to the Council; and when they come to this Chamber I shall endeavour to place before you the reasons which have induced the Government to take the steps they have done in this direction. The Qualification of Electors Bill is one of the first to which I shall refer. At present there are six or eight different qualifications. All these are abolished, and the qualifications are reduced to two simple franchises. One will be that every person having a freehold estate, situated in any electoral district, of £25 in value is entitled to register as an elector; and every man who has resided in the colony twelve months, and has resided in a particular electoral district for six months, will also be entitled to the franchise. We shall by that means get rid of all these various franchises, including that most objectionable one, the miner's right. I do not propose to weary the Council by discussing this measure. Probably I shall have an opportunity of doing that at a future time, when I shall enter fully into the reasons which have induced the Government to take this course. One thing I might mention: the Government, under my advice, has decided to put these various measures of reform into separate Bills. In 1877

I prepared a Bill which was intended to be an entire electoral code. I still believe that that is the best course to follow; but the objection to it is this: If you put all these provisions into one Bill, one man objects to this point, another man objects to that point, and so on, till the result is that you get no Bill at all, and there is no electoral reform. Therefore each particular subject will be brought under the consideration of the Council in a separate Bill, and then, if they are passed, and if I should still continue to be Attorney-General, I should desire to put all these separate Acts into one Act, so that they would then form a complete electoral code. So far as regards the electoral law, that is the position of the Government. All of these Bills, eight in number, are, with two exceptions, prepared, and either have been distributed or will be distributed to-day. The Qualification of Electors Bill I have referred to. Then there will be the Regulation of Elections Bill. That will be very much like the present one. There will, however, be a few alterations, such as an extension of the hours of polling, and several other alterations which are of no great consequence; but the whole of the present Act will be re-written, with the view of reducing its bulk, and making the law more clear than it is at present. Whether I have succeeded in doing so is a matter which will come on for discussion hereafter; but, so far as I have been able, my object has simply been to make the law as clear as possible, and to reduce it in bulk. The next Bill to which I shall have to call the attention of the Council is the Registration of Electors Bill. Now, to my mind, the present system—and I have had some experience of it—is as bad as it can be. I know of nothing more cumbersome—nothing more calculated to deter people from taking the trouble to put their names on the register—than such a system. Especially when we come to the Revision Courts, and to the examination of witnesses—and we know what takes place at these Courts—I conceive that no worse system than our present one could possibly be adopted. It is true it is the system which has been adopted in England, and that it is in operation at the present day; but, nevertheless, it is utterly unsuited to our requirements. It has been the object of the Government, in considering this subject, to establish a system under which every man who has the qualification of an elector should be placed upon the electoral roll, and under which every man who has no right to be on the roll shall be put off. The mode in which it is proposed to do this is very simple. It is proposed that the Registration Officer shall not be a Government official holding numerous other offices, and thus be unable to attend to his duties as Registration Officer, but that he shall be an active, energetic officer, appointed simply for the purpose of seeing that the name of every person entitled to vote is upon the register; it will be his duty also to see that every person holding freehold to the value of £25, or being a resident in the district for six months and in the colony for twelve months, is placed upon the roll. The Bill makes provision also that, in

the event of any Registrar not performing his duty, and not putting people upon the roll who have a right to be on, those people shall have an opportunity of making their claim to be put on at any time, and if the Registration Officer object he may be summoned in the ordinary way before the Resident Magistrate's Court at any time to show cause why he should not place such persons' names on the roll. When we take care that all those persons shall be put upon the roll who have a right to be upon the roll, and provide that the roll shall be purged by taking out summonses against persons who have no right to be on the roll, to compel them to show cause why their names should not be removed from the roll, I think we shall get a system which is simple, and by which we shall get on to the roll all those entitled to be on it, and keep off all those who have no such right. That, at any rate, is the object of the Bill. Whether it will secure that object time alone will show. In Committee, perhaps, suggestions may be thrown out as to amendments which would improve the Bill. There is another Bill to which I will refer, and that is the Corrupt Practices Bill. It is very much the same as the English Act, but it will be reduced in bulk and made somewhat clearer. Then there is the Regulation of Elections Bill. That is not printed; but there is no question of policy involved, its object merely being to make as simple as possible the recording of votes. It is at the Printer's now. The only other Bill to which I shall call attention is the Election Petitions Bill. I am quite sure that the Council will see, as I have seen, that the mode of trying disputed elections—the mode of trying election petitions—is, of all things, the most unsatisfactory. I know of no tribunal that is more unsatisfactory than a tribunal of certain members taken out of the House of Representatives for the purpose of trying a petition against the return of one of the members of the House. I have sat on these Election Committees, and I say that they are altogether unsatisfactory. They have been found so unsatisfactory in England that for some time past jurisdiction in regard to election petitions has been placed in the hands of the Judges of the superior Courts of Westminster. Following, therefore, the lead of England in this matter, we have prepared a measure for the purpose of having appointed the Judges here to try election petitions as nearly as possible after the English form. There are a number of provisions in the English Act which are not applicable to us; and in preparing this measure the object of the Government was to reduce the Bill to as small a compass as possible. Although I have sat as a member of the House of Representatives, and always wish to speak of that branch of the Legislature with the greatest possible respect, still I cannot thus speak of it with reference to the present system of dealing with election petitions. These Election Committees are, of all the tribunals I have had to do with—and I have had to do with a great many—the most objectionable. I hope I am not wearying the Council. I am only desirous of explaining what the Government of which I am a member are doing. I desire to say nothing further on the

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electoral law. The Bills will shortly be in the hands of honorable members themselves, and they will be able to judge how far they are an improvement on the legislation that is in force at the present time on the subject. There is another question which is not peculiarly applicable to this Council, but to which I should like to refer—namely, the question of finance. The question of finance is really the foundation of everything else, because without money I do not know what you are to do at all. Impecunious Governments, like individuals, find themselves in great straits. It has been the endeavour of the Colonial Treasurer (Major Atkinson), during the past few days, as far as possible to arrive at a complete estimate of the present financial position of New Zealand. I am bound to say, so far as his investigations have gone, that the present financial position of the colony is not of a very satisfactory character. The expenditure during the last twelve months has been very much in excess of the revenue. The expenditure we are going on with at the present time—in this present financial year—is very largely in excess of the expected revenue; and in June next there is no question that, unless some step is taken either to increase the revenue or to decrease the expenditure, or both, there will be a very large deficiency indeed in the ordinary revenue to cover the expenditure. That is not a satisfactory state of things; but such it is at present. The only object which the Government has in view is to see exactly the financial position of the country—not, in the first instance, to make any proposals with a view to raising revenue, not to pass any condemnation on what has been done, but simply to lay before the Assembly a complete statement of the financial condition of the country—and that, before any questions of taxation, of raising additional revenue, can be gone into, it is absolutely essential for any Government to do. And, whatever may be the result of what is under the consideration of the House of Representatives with reference to the present Government, no doubt that will be the foundation on which any Government must shape its legislation with a view to balancing the revenue and expenditure of the country. It seems to me that a man who lives beyond his income cannot go on for ever; and so it is with a Government. It must come to an end at some time or other. Therefore, if at the present time there is a very large excess of expenditure over income, the matter ought not to be allowed to rest a single day without looking it in the face, and adopting some means of placing the finances of the colony on a more satisfactory footing. The object of the Government is not, in the first instance, to propose measures by means of which additional revenue may be raised, but simply to ascertain and lay before the General Assembly—the House of Representatives and the Legislative Council—the exact financial position of the country. Sir, an endeavour will be made to have that done; and, supposing that matters proceed in the way which I presume they will this afternoon in the House of Representatives, it is the intention of Major Atkinson to make a statement showing exactly, so far as he can trace it up to the pre-

sent time, the position of the colony financially. The subsequent measures which will be necessary will be the subject of discussion hereafter. So much for the questions of electoral reform and finance. The next question to which I wish to refer is one surrounded with great difficulty and danger—the Native question. No doubt Native affairs in two or three parts of the colony are at this moment in an extremely unsatisfactory state. No doubt considerable danger and apprehension have been caused by what has been going on for some time past on the west coast of this Island, and I am sorry to say that at the present time it does not seem as though that danger is passing readily away. There are a number of Natives in prison at the present time—some convicted, some committed for trial—and no doubt it has been a source of very considerable anxiety what is to become of these. The position of matters somewhat resembles the position of a man who has got a wolf by the ears—it is dangerous to let go, and dangerous to hold on; and it is difficult to say on which side the danger is the greatest. For some time, affairs on the West Coast have been in a very unsatisfactory position. Te Whiti is still holding his meetings from month to month, and altogether the appearance of things is far from satisfactory. The Natives are no doubt watching with great anxiety what is to become of their friends and relatives who are now incarcerated in the gaols of Wellington and Dunedin. It is the intention of the Government, with reference to this question, to appoint a Commission for the purpose of investigating whether or not any real grievances exist. Grievances are alleged by the Natives, and by some Europeans on the part of the Natives. They may or may not exist—I am not in a position to express any opinion upon it; but it is evident, at the present time, that some very decided steps should be taken for the purpose of ascertaining whether grievances do exist, and, if so, of redressing them. If there are no grievances, then probably strong means must be adopted to allay the feeling of anxiety that at present prevails, and to insure the peace of the colony. With regard to the other portion of the colony where Native matters have not been in a satisfactory state—the Thames District—no doubt the position of affairs there is very awkward and unpleasant just now. There are certain men there who have committed an offence against life. Some Natives there discharged shots at Europeans, and wounded one man severely. They have put themselves beyond the law; they defy us to take them, and are building pae and fortifying themselves. Now, that is a most unfortunate thing, and in a civilized country it is impossible that such a state of affairs should be allowed to continue. It is a threatening attitude which they assume, and it is of the greatest possible importance that this matter should be set right, so that it may no longer be a threatening danger to the community. No doubt the people in the neighbourhood are excited, and would, perhaps, like to urge the Government to take immediate steps in the matter; and no doubt the Government which preceded this one was urged on to a course which might

possibly involve the country in war. Once begun, there is no knowing where that war would end. I am sure that honorable members, and those who have to deal with Native affairs, know that when war begins there is no telling to what part of the country it may extend. As regards the present, nothing is being done further than that Mr. Mackay has been sent to the Thames by the late Government for the purpose of investigating the matter and seeing what should be done. Until we get his report it is difficult to say what course should be pursued. Nothing is causing greater anxiety to the Government than the question of Native affairs; and it will be the anxious endeavour of the Government, as far as we can, to deal with this question in a way to avoid war. I know of nothing that would be more disastrous to New Zealand than a Native war. I remember the colonists of the North were at one time charged with a desire for war on account of the commissariat expenditure which it gave rise to; but no charge was ever more unjust and unreasonable. The amount expended during war-times by the Imperial and Colonial Governments went into the pockets of a few individuals only, and the great bulk of the community were as opposed as I was to war, believing it to be the most injurious event that could happen to the colony. It will be the object and the great desire of the present Government to avoid war. On the other hand, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that we may be placed in a position where we cannot evade it. Offences against the law cannot be allowed to take place without doing something to prevent their recurrence and to punish the offenders. In endeavouring to inflict this punishment, however, we must proceed in such a way as to avoid a complication of Native difficulties. The intentions of the Government are these: that they will, as far as possible, redress any grievances the Natives have; that they will punish offenders as far as it is possible to do so, and evade war if by any possibility that can be done. Sir, those are the great and important questions which will engage the attention of the Assembly during this session—the electoral business, the Native business, and the finances of the country. If these questions can be disposed of during the present session, I am quite sure this Council will say the Assembly has done a good deal of work, and more than could reasonably be expected to be done. Whether or not we shall be successful in bringing these matters to an issue, it is impossible for me now to say. I am sorry to say that we cannot proceed speedily with a number of measures which we should like to introduce; but the three subjects which I have mentioned are those which the Government are at the present time attempting to deal with. There are also, no doubt, a number of other subjects of great importance to be dealt with, such as the purchase of Native lands, and the reforming of the Native Land Court; but these measures are not of that urgency which appertains to the other subjects I have already referred to. Of course, looking to the fact that it is now rather late in the year, there may be difficulty in going into

some of those measures that ought to be settled speedily; but the Government will be prepared to devote its best energies to the subjects with which it will have to deal, and will be willing, as long as the Assembly think fit to sit, to go on with the measures which I have indicated. I have troubled the Council at some length; but I was desirous of explaining these three subjects. I would only remind honorable members that there are other matters of a great deal of importance—especially those questions relating to the dealing with Native lands—which will also receive the anxious consideration of the Government. There was a proposition by the former Government that there should be a particular mode of sale by the Government acting on the part of the Natives. The present Government are disposed to entertain that favourably; but the fear I have is, that the Natives will not accept that position—that we shall have some difficulty in inducing them to agree with the proposal. I quite agree that no better system, if practicable, could be adopted; and, if we have time, the Government will bring in a Bill dealing with the sale of Native lands, and another reforming the Native Land Court. These things will be dealt with in two different Bills, because if you mix up too many subjects together in one Bill you get your Bill thrown out—because one man disagrees with one part, and another man disagrees with another part. The intention of the Government is to divide this subject into two—to reform the Native Land Court, and to leave the matter there, without determining in that measure how the land shall be subsequently dealt with. There is also, on the part of the Government, a desire to reduce the price of land, especially as regards the deferred-payment land. Great exception has been taken that the price is too high—that it deters people from settling on the land. A Bill will be introduced for the purpose of dealing with this subject, and other minor Bills will be brought in. I am quite sure that when these Bills are introduced the Council will give them that fair consideration which they deserve, and that they will deal with them in a liberal manner. I am much obliged to honorable members for having given me this opportunity to make this statement to the Council.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—Although there is no motion before the House, I desire to say one or two words of a personal character. The Hon. the Attorney-General complained of some remarks made by me with reference to the action of the Government in going outside the walls of this Council to appoint a representative here. I beg to say that my remarks were not directed against the Hon. the Attorney-General in his personal character. I have enjoyed his friendship for a great many years, and I do not think there is one of his friends who has a greater admiration of his political character than myself. The honorable gentleman has, in times past, conferred services on this country which have never been sufficiently recognized. He at one time sat in this Council, and left it to take a seat in another place. It was always a matter of regret to me that he left this Council, and apart from other

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considerations it is a great matter of gratification to me to see him return here once more. In making the observations I did, I carefully said that, if the choice was to fall upon any person outside this Council, there was no one upon whom I would be more glad that it should fall than the honorable gentleman. I simply confined my objection to the Government seeking outside the walls of this Council for members to represent them here. There are but one or two members who can attain that position, and it seemed to me hard that they should be passed over for any political reason in that way. In spite of what the honorable gentleman says about myself, I accept the appointment as being complimentary to the Council, as no more competent man could be appointed. With regard to the future Bills to be brought down, I think they can be better discussed at some other time. While I guard myself against saying that they are not open to exception, I at the same time have only a right to reply upon a personal point, and to assure the honorable gentleman that my remarks were not of a personal character, and that my feelings of friendship towards him are what they always were. I would like to ask a question without notice: Does the Attorney-General propose to take business, or would it be more convenient to adjourn the business of the country for the present?

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER.—I am entirely in the hands of the Council. I have come here to-day quite prepared to proceed; but, if the Council think it more appropriate to adjourn, I am quite willing to do so. For my part, I have no feeling one way or the other. I see no reason why we should not proceed with the ordinary business. If an honorable member moves the adjournment, the Council can then express its opinion. I shall bow with deference to the opinion of the majority, but for my own part I see no reason why we should not go on.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—Then I shall move that this Council at its rising do adjourn until Friday next. Inasmuch as the honorable gentleman has told us there are Bills of importance—Bills of a political character—I think it would be more convenient, and more consistent with our past practice, to adjourn till Friday next. The honorable gentleman says he is not aware of any circumstance to justify our adjourning until that date. The only thing that justifies me in moving the motion I do is that I understand that a distinct want-of-confidence motion has been tabled in the other Chamber, and it has been our practice, as a rule, not to proceed with business here while such a vote is pending. I have no other reason for moving the adjournment beyond that it will be more consistent with our practice in the past. I have no feeling with regard to proceeding with business of a non-political character; but, after the disposal of such matters, I think it would be more convenient and consistent if we did adjourn until Friday.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I think there would be an advantage in going on, at any rate, with the notices of motion, and disposing of them. Probably two Committees will be appointed, and

honorable members who would be in town would have something to employ them in the meantime. These notices of motion can scarcely be regarded as having a political character. They have no political signification whatever, and it would be advantageous if they were considered; so that honorable members, instead of loitering about town, would have an opportunity of turning time to beneficial account. I see no objection, on the rising of the Council, to adjourn till Friday; but, at any rate, these notices of motion should be disposed of first.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER.—Do I understand the honorable and gallant member to move that the Council, at its rising, do adjourn till Friday? The honorable gentleman did not propose that we should adjourn forthwith?

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I meant to move, when we came to the Orders of the day, that the Council should adjourn till Friday, if the honorable gentleman did not himself move to that effect.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT.—Is it competent for me to move an amendment? I move, That, on the rising of the Council, we adjourn till Tuesday next. I do so in order that we may not walk about the streets idly in the meantime. I want to go into the country, and see the nakedness of the surroundings of Wellington. It is necessary for the sake of our health that we should go away from the stinks and smells of this abominable city. I should like to renovate my health by going into the country. It has been the custom of this House to adjourn when a motion of want of confidence has been tabled in the other branch of the Legislature.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—No, no.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT.—We did it when the last Ministry went out; and that is a precedent for my moving that the Council, at its rising, do adjourn till Tuesday. I shall take a division on the matter.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I wish to explain the contradiction which I gave to the remark of the Hon. Colonel Brett, that it had been the practice to adjourn while motions of want of confidence were being debated in the other branch of the Legislature. I think the precedent cuts the other way. Two sessions ago there was a want-of-confidence motion on the Paper for many weeks, and yet this Council went on with the business, and the want-of-confidence motion remained on the Order Paper till the last day of the session.

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY.—I intend to support the amendment. It is usual, when votes of want of confidence are tabled in the other Chamber, that business should not be proceeded with here. I listened with great attention to the statement of the Hon. the Attorney-General, but I was disappointed about this: that I expected him to make some reference to the motion of want of confidence, and to state what was the intention of the Government respecting it, because I have heard, on very good authority, that the Government have not a majority of the House of Representatives, and that they intend to meet this want-of-confidence motion. If that is the intention of the Government, I do not see that there is any

use in the Council going on with the business. They might as well adjourn for a longer period than Tuesday. I shall support the amendment.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—I hope the Council will not think it presumptuous in me, as one of the only three members present in the Council of those who met in May, 1854, if I venture to offer to the learned gentleman opposite (the Hon. Mr. Whitaker) my congratulations on his having returned to his seat in this Council. It has not only been my good fortune to be united with that honorable gentleman during all our lives by ties of close personal friendship, but it was also my good fortune to be associated with him in the first Government that was formed after responsible government was introduced to this colony; and, ever since that time, the services which the honorable gentleman has rendered to the country, irrespective of party and the various political conflicts in which he has taken part, have been such that none of us, on whatever side of politics we may be, can do otherwise than feel a high satisfaction at again numbering amongst the members of this Council a gentleman whose career has been so distinguished as that of my honorable friend. I hope the honorable and gallant Colonel opposite will not press his amendment that we should adjourn until Tuesday, because it will be necessary to make some provision for the public service immediately, and if we adjourn till Tuesday we may place the public service at a great disadvantage. I quite allow that, when a motion of want of confidence is pending in the other branch of the Legislature, it is not convenient for us in this Council to advance any political business, or to deal with subjects that may bring up party considerations and party conflicts; but we need not adjourn over such a time as might debar the House of Representatives from making that provision for the public service which it is necessary to make.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—I should like to say a few words in the way of congratulating the Hon. Mr. Whitaker on his presence in this Chamber. I have known him for twenty years, and I have always been of opinion that no more able man could be found in this colony. I am sorry to say that I cannot support either the motion or the amendment, because I think it quite possible that before Friday next there may be another Government in office, who may wish to carry on the business of the colony at once. If we were to pass such a resolution as this it would place obstacles in the way of the Government, so that I hope we shall adjourn for a shorter time. I am glad to hear that the Attorney-General has no intention of proceeding with any Bill to-day, but, at the same time, I was very much pleased to hear that the Government proposed to take action with regard to the sale of agricultural land on deferred payments. As a matter of fact, I had drafted a notice of motion on the same subject, which I will now read. It is as follows: "That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that, when there are two or more applicants for a section of agricultural land on deferred payments, the section should not be put up to

auction between the applicants, but be decided by lot." My object in bringing forward that motion is this: that applicants for deferred-payment land in future should merely pay what we have paid in the past for our land—namely, the upset price of the land.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—While congratulating the Hon. Mr. Whitaker on his appearance in this Council, I may express the hope that, if there should be another Government in existence on Friday, as the Hon. Captain Fraser seems to indicate as being possible, it will distinguish itself by making an appointment as satisfactory to the Council as that of the Hon. Mr. Whitaker. I am sure there is not a supporter of the present Government who will not in that case feel some compensation for their loss. I agree that the proposed adjournment till Tuesday next would be too long, and would much prefer to vote for an amendment for shortening the period.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I shall venture to move, as an amendment, That the Council adjourn till Thursday next. It seems to me that, if the circumstances are such as were shadowed forth by the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell, we should not adjourn for such a period as might put the Government, or any new Government that might come into power, to any inconvenience. Therefore I think it would be better that we should meet earlier than Friday, in order to deal with any business that may arise. I will now move, That the Council adjourn till Thursday.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER.—With regard to the observations which fell from the honorable member, Mr. Buckley, about the Government "stone-walling" a want-of-confidence motion, I can only say I have never heard of it. I have never been a party to "stone-walling," and have no intention of being so. All the present Government wishes to do is to place the position of the colony clearly before the Assembly, so as to enable the Assembly to judge what course should be pursued. With regard to whether such a proceeding is contemplated in the other House, I knew nothing about it, and I do not think that it is right to go upon such an assumption. I am not aware that it is convenient that what is said in the lobbies from time to time—the scandal, or whatever it may be—should be imported into the debates of this Council, and should be held up as a guide as to the course which we should pursue. I think it is not convenient. I shall say nothing upon that point. So far as I am concerned—so far as the Government are concerned—we have no desire to press the Council to go on with any business; but I think the suggestion made by one honorable gentleman opposite ought to be adopted, and there should not be any long adjournment, and for this reason: It is the intention of the Colonial Treasurer to ask to-day, in another place, for leave to introduce a Bill for the purpose of increasing the amount of deficiency bills which may be issued for the payment of the current expenditure of the Government. The Government, under the Public Revenues Act, have power to issue deficiency bills to the extent of £400,000. At the present time the whole of these bills have been issued, and, what is

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more, the whole of the money has been spent. As a consequence, if further money is not obtained, a great number of persons who would be entitled to receive money from the Government cannot be paid. The intention of the Colonial Treasurer is to ask the House to increase the power to issue deficiency bills to £600,000, or, in other words, to issue £200,000 more. Money is urgently required by the Government, and, if the Bill passes the other branch of the Legislature, it will be necessary to obtain the sanction of the Legislative Council to it. Therefore I propose that the adjournment shall be until to-morrow, so that, if the Bill should come up, we may be in a position to deal with it. I hope the Council will take that view of the matter. In regard to ordinary business I am entirely in the hands of the Council. I do not care whether we go on with it or not. It will be seen by the Order Paper of another place that it is proposed to suspend the Standing Orders for the purpose of procuring the money required, so that we may expect the Bill up here at very short notice, and it is our duty to be in a position to assist the other branch of the Legislature in passing this necessary measure.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I hope I may be allowed to withdraw my motion. In introducing it, I pointed out that so long an adjournment ought not to be made if it would cause inconvenience to the public service. I now think it would be well to meet from day to day, so as to be able to pass such a measure as has been foreshadowed by the Attorney-General. I have no objection at all to meeting day after day, so long as we understand we are not to go on with ordinary Ministerial business, but that we simply meet to do business of a formal character, to confirm action with regard to financial matters which may be taken in another place.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

RAILWAY CONTRACTS.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he should probably meet the wishes of the Council by refraining from importing into the question any debatable matter. The fact was, there was no political object in this motion; but there was some reason to believe that the provisions of the Railways Construction Act, and the Public Works Act which was incorporated in the Railways Construction Act, had not been completely observed in the letting of contracts since the session of 1878, and that there must have been some misapprehension on the part of some departments as to the intention of the Legislature: and, if so, it was necessary to point out what was the correct interpretation, or to make the intentions of the Legislature more clear than at present they appeared to be. It would be sufficient for him to remind the Council that the 17th section of the Immigration and Public Works Appropriation Act was agreed in Conference between the two Houses to be withdrawn and treated as a nullity; and that it was nothing but a technical difficulty which prevented the Speaker of the other House from agreeing to the course

which the Conferences had laid down. But contracts had nevertheless been entered into under the authority of that clause, and payments made under it: so that the whole object they had in view at the Conferences, as a mode of getting over what threatened to be a very serious conflict between the two branches of the Legislature, had been entirely frustrated. He need not remind the Hon. the Speaker of this, nor that he (Sir F. Dillon Bell), having held the same office as he (the Hon. the Speaker) held in 1878, ventured to express complete agreement with the course taken by the Speaker on that occasion in declining to assent to the Appropriation Act being amended by message from the Crown; but the result had been, so far, that the agreement made between the two Houses had been entirely frustrated. The honorable gentleman, the late Colonial Secretary, would not suppose that he attributed to him unfair dealing with the Council, or had himself been concerned in a breach of faith towards the Council; but he did think the honorable gentleman made a mistake last session in saying that the Government had acted upon legal advice as to the true meaning of the 3rd clause of the Railways Construction Act. Perhaps the Hon. the Attorney-General would be kind enough to say whether there existed any record of the advice he was referring to—namely, that, although the Railways Construction Act said that contracts should not be entered into “unless” the Governor’s assent was given, and certain other formalities gone through, yet it was not necessary for such assent to be given before the contract was entered into, and it might be given afterwards. He (Sir F. Dillon Bell) was prevented last session by the forms of the Council from doing that which he now proposed to do—namely, to read the original proposal made by the Managers of the House of Representatives to the Conference. It was in these words:—

“Before contract: 1st. The Chief Engineer to certify that route chosen is the proper one. 2nd. The plans and estimates to be approved by Governor in Council. Further proviso: At each sitting of Parliament, plans and estimates that have been approved by Governor in Council, and on which contracts have been taken and also on which no contracts have been taken, to be laid on table of House and Council.”

That was written by the Hon. Mr. Stout, whose absence from Parliament they all regretted, and who held at that time the same office which was now held by the Hon. Mr. Whitaker—the Attorney-Generalship of the colony. And if the proposition had not been so clearly expressed, that those formalities should be gone through and completed before any contract was entered into, he (Sir F. Dillon Bell) was absolutely certain that the agreement which was come to between the two Houses would never have been made. Under those circumstances, he thought it was very desirable, without attributing blame to anybody, and without any object which might be supposed to have any party colour, that the Council should take steps to find out all about the letting of those contracts. If he was found to be wrong in assuming that the provisions of the law had not

been strictly adhered to, no one would be more glad of it than himself. But if, either through imperfect audit or through the want of proper apprehension of the law by any department, it should be found that the provisions of the law had not been complied with, the Council would doubtless take such steps as were necessary to secure that the intentions of the Legislature should for the future be always strictly carried out. They were about to sanction the appropriation of the loan of £5,000,000, and, on whatever side of politics they might be, it was obviously necessary not to allow that appropriation to be so made as to permit any action in connection with the spending of the money which was not strictly in accordance with the law. He was sure every one would agree that that was a proper object to be gained; and the Committee would do good service by laying down more strictly the rules which should be pursued in future, as every step they took in the present state of the finances of the colony only showed more and more that that strictness was absolutely necessary.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed, to inquire into and report upon the several contracts for railway construction entered into since the session 1878; the dates when the engineers' reports and certificates were submitted to the Governor in Council, and His Excellency's assent received thereto; the nature, amount, and date of each contract; the several payments made thereunder, and the votes to which the same are charged. Such Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. J. Johnston, the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, the Hon. Mr. P. A. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. Wood, and the mover; with power to call for persons, papers, and records. Four to be a quorum. To report in three weeks."—(*Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell.*)

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER had no objection to the motion. Of course it was of the utmost importance that the provisions of the law should be strictly complied with. Whether they had or had not been in this case, he had no means of knowing at the present time. The Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell intimated to him on the previous day that he thought there was a legal opinion on the subject, which, if it had any existence, he desired should be placed before the Committee or the Council. He had caused inquiry to be made, but no such legal opinion had been found. However, there seemed to be an impression in the Government offices that an opinion had been given; and further search was being made. If the opinion were found, it would be produced, should the Government think it proper and desirable. Of course there were occasions on which such opinions were produced; but there were many instances in which it would be most improper to produce them, for legal opinions given by the Law Officers of the Crown were generally regarded as confidential, and not to be made public.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE thought the result of the honorable gentleman's motion would be to prove that all the requirements of the law

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had been complied with in this case. He desired to say that he regretted the clause having been included in the Act; but the honorable gentleman himself, the Hon. the Speaker, and those better informed on constitutional law than he (Colonel Whitmore) professed to be, held that no change could be made in it by message from the Governor, and that no clause could be eliminated after the Bill had passed another place. The clause having been included in the Bill, and having become law, there was no alternative but to comply with its provisions. There was no discretion left to the Government. He thought it would be found the law had been carried out; although, of course, there were Law Officers and Law Officers. Legal opinions might differ; but, if the Government acted upon the opinion of their Attorney-General, that was sufficient to justify any action they might take. He was not prepared to say that there had been any written legal opinion, and he certainly had guarded himself from intimating that there was such an opinion on record which could be produced. The honorable gentleman assured them that there was no political significance in the motion, although there were persons who would say that it looked very much as if there was. However, he would recognize it as a non-political motion, and presume that the desire of the honorable member was simply to see that the law was adhered to. He hoped the result would be that, if the report of the Committee showed that the requirements of the law had not been attended to, the occurrence would act as a caution to future Governments; but he thought it would be shown that the Government had done all that the law required them to do. Honorable gentlemen would bear him out when he said that in 1878 he did not pledge the Government that they would not act under the clause; and he said this because on former occasions the honorable gentleman had rather led him to believe that he (the Hon. Colonel Whitmore) was accused of a personal breach of faith. He had referred to *Hansard*, and he could not find that he had given such a pledge; but, if he had, he had acted wrongly, because he could not have so pledged the Government to neglect the law. He was quite ready to agree to the motion before the Council, and acknowledged the honorable gentleman's courtesy in asking him to appoint one or two members of the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said it was his intention to support the motion of the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell. At the same time he must express his regret that the motion was so limited in its character. He thought great advantage would be gained were the inquiry to be made more general in its nature. Therefore it was his intention to move the addition of a few words to give effect to that idea. With reference to the subject of audit, it was a matter of which honorable members generally appeared to have a very faint idea. To him it seemed that the audit was a costly and cumbrous machinery to render more difficult the straining at gnats and more easy the swallowing of camels. A few years ago the Audit Act required that the Auditors should report direct to Parliament upon matters

coming within their department: indeed, it was expressly provided that, within thirty days of Parliament assembling, the Auditors should make their report; and, as the Controllers of Audit were officers of Parliament, it appeared to him that such a proceeding was right and proper. But for some years past—for what reason he knew not, nor did he know the Government under whom the change was made, nor the circumstances attending the change—this provision had been set aside, and the reports had not been made. He could not but think it would be well to revert to the practice which formerly obtained, of the Controllers of Audit reporting directly to Parliament, which stood towards them in the position of masters. The words that he proposed to insert in the motion were as follow, to come in after the word "charged:" "and also generally to examine into and report upon the efficiency of the existing mode of audit." If this amendment were adopted, it would be the duty of the Committee, to report, first of all, upon the special circumstances referred to it, and, secondly, upon the general subject of the existing audit. He thought there would be great advantage from this inquiry. It would not be one of a political character, but would simply be such an inquiry into the audit as would satisfy honorable gentlemen generally both of its character and of its efficiency. But, apart from that, such an inquiry was desirable after a system had been in operation for some years. By that time the officers themselves should be aware of its weak points, and be able not only to point them out, but to indicate the steps which should be taken to improve the system in the future.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE hoped this would be put in a separate motion, because there was no necessary connection between the two subjects. It would be very much better if the honorable gentleman would bring forward a distinct resolution recommending an inquiry into the mode of audit. That would have his support, but, as it was, the amendment mixed up two distinct matters.

Amendment agreed to, and motion, as amended, agreed to.

AUDIT OF PUBLIC COMPANIES' ACCOUNTS.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES, before proceeding to move the motion standing in his name, wished to congratulate the Attorney-General upon his return to the Legislative Council, and also the Council upon the addition to its members of a gentleman so able, and possessing so much the confidence of all the members of the Council. The motion he was about to move had been suggested to him by reading from time to time in the public papers of the defalcations of managers, clerks, and treasurers of companies and associations of different kinds. He attributed these defalcations primarily to inefficient audit. The manner in which the auditors were appointed was the worst evil in the whole system. The plan usually adopted was for the shareholders to appoint auditors; but, generally speaking, the names were submitted by the managers or

directors of the company, and the auditors were elected as a matter of course. Another drawback was, that in many cases the remuneration was not sufficient to cover the expenses of an efficient audit, and the duties which the auditors performed were of a perfunctory character, and did not go into the essence of audit at all, the auditors merely taking for granted the statements placed before them. To this he attributed the failure of a great many companies—to the shareholders not having a thorough knowledge of what was going on from time to time, and to speculations. Were a more efficient audit established, it would be impossible to carry on a system of speculation. In a very short time it would be found that these acts were being perpetrated, and the evil, instead of occasioning a complete collapse, as was the case from time to time with banks and companies of various kinds, would be stopped before it reached a climax, and there would be an avoidance of that loss and misery which so frequently followed the acts of unfaithful directors and others in charge of these companies. Many instances had occurred within the last year—notably those of the City of Glasgow Bank and the Provincial and Suburban Bank of Melbourne—in which huge losses had been sustained by shareholders. Now, he asked, would this system of fraud have been continued had a proper system of audit been established from the commencement? He took it that, instead of the auditors in these cases performing their duties efficiently, they had taken for granted the statements placed before them, and, without counting the coin in the bank, without looking at the securities held by the bank, or in any other way making themselves acquainted with the internal management of the institution, had certified to the correctness of the accounts; and the evil went on from year to year until a collapse brought to light the utter failure of the audit. He would not have put this motion on the Paper had his honorable friend the Attorney-General occupied the bench on which he now sat, because that honorable gentleman must be aware, from his long connection with public business in the colony, that there was no subject of this character which was of greater importance than that of having a proper system of audit of the accounts of public companies. What he wished to see was this: that the Government should pass a Bill making it imperative that every auditor should be licensed by the Crown, and should pay a small fee for his license, and give ample security for the due performance of his duties. Although this was apparently a small matter, yet it was really one of large importance, touching as it did nearly all the public companies in the colony. They heard from the mother-country, where there were large benefit societies and trades unions, that, through mismanagement, or the absconding of the principal manager, most, or the whole, of the funds of some of those societies had been lost, and persons of economical and provident habits, who had been imagining that they had saved a maintenance for the future, had suddenly found themselves left penniless. He therefore thought that this was a subject which a Committee should take in hand,

and with regard to which some measure should be passed making it compulsory on all auditors to have a license from the Government, and to give ample security for the due performance of their functions.

Motion made, and question put, "That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that the question of the auditing of the accounts of public companies or associations in the colony should be referred to a Select Committee. Such Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. J. Johnston, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, and the mover."—(*Hon. Mr. Holmes.*)

Motion agreed to.

TIMBER IMPORTS.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON, it was ordered, That the return, showing the quantity and value of the timber of all descriptions imported into the colony during the years ended 30th June, 1878, and 30th June, 1879, respectively, which was laid upon the table of this Council on the 25th September last, be printed.

The Council adjourned at a quarter-past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 14th October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Reading—Waikari Telegraph Station—Nelson Waste Lands Board—Drainage Bill—Ministerial Statement—Public Revenues Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Primitive Methodists' Temporal Affairs Regulation Bill, Napier Swamp Nuisance Bill.

SECOND READING.

Church Property Trust (Canterbury) Bill.

THIRD READING.

New Plymouth Company's Gas Bill.

WAIKARI TELEGRAPH STATION.

Mr. SAUNDERS asked the Government, If they will erect and open a telegraph station at Waikari during the present year? He might say that Waikari was an important town immediately north of the Weka Pass. It was the natural centre of a large agricultural district, and would soon be the terminus, for a time, of the Great Northern Railway. Although the wire passed through the town, they had not yet a telegraph station. This state of things had only existed so long in consequence of the town having been forgotten altogether by the late Government. He trusted to hear that the Government would be prepared to take some action to have a telegraph station erected.

Mr. HALL replied that the Government would,

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during the present financial year, take steps to establish a telegraph station at Waikari.

NELSON WASTE LANDS BOARD.

Mr. PITT asked the Minister of Lands, Upon whose recommendation Messrs. Joshua Bird and John Kerr were lately appointed members of the Nelson Waste Lands Board; and if he will lay before this House any papers connected with such appointments? He would simply say that these appointments had occasioned considerable surprise in the district in which they had been made. The particular qualifications which these gentlemen might possess had not hitherto been generally known. The appointment of one of these gentlemen had caused considerable astonishment, inasmuch as he belonged to a class which had not generally found favour with the late Government. He was a runholder; and also resided fifty-two miles from the City of Nelson, the place where the Land Board met.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the papers relating to these appointments did not show that they were made upon the recommendation of any one. They simply showed that instructions had been given to the department. If the honorable member would call at the Government offices he would see the papers, and if there were any which he wished to be laid on the table the Government would furnish them to the House.

DRAINAGE BILL.

Mr. SEYMOUR asked the Minister of Lands, If he will introduce a Drainage Bill this session? It would be in the recollection of some honorable members, at any rate, that when Mr. Donald Reid occupied the position of Minister of Lands he introduced a Drainage Bill. The late Government, when they took possession of the Treasury benches, declined to go on with that Bill amongst other things. It was a subject of very considerable interest to a great many persons in the colony, and that was the reason he put this question on the Paper. He trusted the present Minister of Lands would be able to give a favourable answer to it.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that the Government would bring in a Bill upon the subject this session.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, before the business on the Order Paper is proceeded with, I desire, with the leave of the House, to make the Ministerial Statement which I promised on Friday last. But perhaps the House will first bear with me for a few minutes while I make a personal explanation which I promised to the House, on the occasion of the debate upon the motion of want of confidence in the late Government, I would make to it. Upon that occasion it was stated that I had sought out certain Maori members of this House and had made certain proposals to them. It was stated that I had offered one of those honorable gentlemen the position of Native Minister, with all the powers of a European Minister, and that I had promised to give him control over all Maori lands not Crown-granted.

It was, in addition, said by the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) that that Maori member had stated that I had promised to stop all sales and leases of land. I do not imagine that the honorable gentleman persists in the statement, because it is too evident an error for him to follow it up.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The honorable gentleman is in error. I did not say that he promised to make the Maori member a Native Minister and give him control of all Maori matters.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman stated that Tomoana had said that I promised to stop all sales and leases of lands. He is in error in supposing that the honorable gentleman said that.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I myself heard the statement made in Maori, and afterwards repeated by the interpreter.

Mr. HALL.—I was astounded at this statement. An honorable gentleman who sat near me at once said, before I spoke, that the honorable member was entirely in error.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I spoke from my personal hearing. The statement was made in the House.

Mr. HALL.—It is a matter of memory. It really makes no difference to me, however, because I can prove that the statement is not correct. The Maori members were not sought for by me. A meeting had been arranged at their request, but it was adjourned because we could not get a satisfactory interpreter. I then had a meeting with the Native members in Mr. Locke's house, he being ill in bed. There were also present my honorable friend Mr. Rolleston, the honorable member for Wairarapa (Mr. Beetham), and Mr. Ormond. Every word that passed was heard by those honorable gentlemen. I have asked them to be good enough to put down in writing what took place, and they have done so. I did the same. I have compared the two accounts, and there is a substantial agreement between them. I do not know whether the House wishes me to read the document; I am entirely in the hands of the House as to that; but it completely exonerates me from the imputation that I had held out any unreasonable hopes whatever, or said a single word which I should be ashamed to see published in every newspaper in the colony. The following is the statement:—

"The following is my recollection of what passed between Mr. Hall, Te Wheoro, and Henare Tomoana:—

"Henare Tomoana told me he and Wheoro wished to meet Mr. Hall at Mr. Locke's lodgings: the object being to get a reliable means of communication between the parties.

"A meeting was arranged accordingly; Mr. Hall, Mr. Rolleston, Mr. Beetham, Mr. Te Wheoro, Mr. Henare Tomoana, and myself being present. Mr. Locke interpreted.

"Henare Tomoana said one of their wishes was to have the dealing with the land handed over to the Maori Ministers.

"Mr. Hall replied that could not be done; and asked if he meant right of interference with the Land Court, &c.

"Henare explained he meant land that had not been through the Court; and Mr. Hall declined

to make any definite reply, saying he would consider the question, and reply at some future meeting.

"Henare Tomoana and Te Wheoro inquired what the position of Maori Ministers would be under Mr. Hall's Government, if he took office, particularly what name they would be known by. Both chiefs complained that, in the past, the so-called Maori Ministers had had no power or recognized duties. They instanced Hoani Nahe.

"Mr. Hall replied that any Native acting as Maori Minister with him would be expected to work, and would have a recognized position; that he would consider about the name, and communicate again. On Native matters they would, in conjunction with the European Minister having charge of Native affairs, make recommendations to Cabinet, and take part in their discussion and consideration. They would be expected to take an active part in seeing the decisions of the Government on Native matters given effect to among their countrymen.

"Henare Tomoana expressed an opinion there should be Native committees in each principal district, working under the European and Native Ministers. But Mr. Hall made no reply to that proposal.

"The interview then terminated, the Natives undertaking to put their views in writing, for Mr. Hall's consideration.

"I omitted to say that, at the beginning of the interview, Mr. Hall stated his main object was to get rid of personal government in Native affairs, and to so work as to bring the Natives and Europeans equally under the laws of the country; that that would be his great object, and so get rid of the attempt at personal government as practised by the present Native Minister.

"October 6, 1879."

"J. D. ORMOND.

"We thoroughly concur in Mr. Ormond's report of the conversation between the Natives and Mr. Hall.

"GEORGE BEEHAM.

"W. ROLLESTON."

"On Friday evening Henare Tomoana handed me a paper in Maori, which he said contained the views of Te Wheoro and himself. He asked me to get Mr. Hall to sign it. I told him Mr. Hall was too busy to look at the paper then; that it must be translated and considered; and that I would get Mr. Hall to fix some time to meet him and Te Wheoro about it. I did not myself look at the paper until the next day. When I met Henare I told him it contained reference to subjects that had never been named at our interviews, and which would never be agreed to by any Government or party. This he allowed, and said the subjects I referred to had been inserted by himself and Te Wheoro, without any previous communication with us.

"J. D. ORMOND.

"October 6, 1879."

That gives a plain and straightforward account of what took place between myself and the honorable Maori members. I should not have thought it necessary to make this explanation, if the statements made on the evening in question had not gone beyond the four walls of this House;

because I think the intention of those statements and their general character were sufficiently obvious to those who heard them. Nor should I have thought it necessary to make the explanation to any gentlemen who have known me for any length of time. But, Sir, those statements are on record, and they will go to parts of New Zealand where I am not personally known; the character of its public men is the property of the colony, and a cloud should not rest upon their character when that cloud can be dispelled. I will only say, with reference to the statement of Mr. Tomoana, that an honorable gentleman who sat near me at the time said at once that the interpretation was not correct.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Name.

Mr. HALL.—Mr. Ormond.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—He does not speak Maori.

Mr. HALL.—He may not be so well acquainted with the Native language and manners and customs as the honorable gentleman; but still he possesses a certain knowledge of the Maori language; and his assertion was confirmed, before I had been ten minutes out of the House, by others who are undoubtedly Maori scholars. I apologize for having taken up the time of the House. I promised to state to the House what the real facts of the case were. I have now done so. I can only add that, if I had held out the extravagant expectations that were mentioned, I should have been unworthy to fill the office I now hold. I thank the House very much for having listened to me.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—As a statement made by myself has been impugned by the honorable gentleman, I hope I may be allowed to say a very few words. First of all, I will say at once that I accept, as I am bound to accept, the honorable gentleman's own denial that he made these promises. But I will point out to him this: that, in the very paper he has now read, the Maori member admits that he said these things in the House, but that he was not authorized to say so—it was his own thought.

Mr. HALL.—No; he does not say he stated them in the House. He said he put them in a letter which he handed to Mr. Ormond, and which I have never yet seen.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I say this much in the presence of the House, in the presence of the Maori members, and in the presence of several gentlemen who speak Maori: that what the honorable gentleman did say was this—in substance: "Mr. Hall is a new man to me. I have seen him. I did not go to him; he came to me. I asked him so-and-so, and he said Yes; I asked him so-and-so, and he said Yes; I asked him so-and-so, and he said Yes"—three distinct statements one after the other. Now, the honorable gentleman listened to these things being put into English by the interpreter: why not challenge them then? I hold in my hand a copy of *Hansard*, which I undertake to say has been distinctly altered and garbled, but which yet contains one most important statement. It is this:—

"I said to Mr. Hall, 'If your side gets into power, will you have a Native Minister?' He said, 'Yes.' 'Will you give to the Native Minis-

ter—to the Maori Minister—the sole power of managing Native affairs?' He said, 'Yes.'"

Mr. HALL.—I would venture to suggest that the only point as to which I impugned the honorable gentleman's statement was his assertion that Mr. Tomoana had said that I promised to stop the sales and leases of land. There, I say, the honorable gentleman is incorrect; and that is the only point at issue between us. The rest is not a matter between myself and the honorable gentleman, but between myself and my honorable colleague. Therefore I do not think any statement the honorable gentleman may make beyond that point is a personal explanation. He is initiating a discussion in which I ought to be allowed to take part.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I am simply quoting from *Hansard*, which, to my mind, even now, in its present state, altered as it has been very materially, confirms what I said at the time. The honorable member continued,—

"I explained to him that I was not speaking about those lands which have been operated on by the law—Crown-granted lands—but purely Native lands."

Well, if he is to have the whole control of Maori affairs, he must necessarily have the management of these lands. I say I accept the honorable gentleman's denial at once, as I am bound to do in honor, and which I would do irrespective of the obligation imposed by the rules of the House. But, as a matter of fact, the Native member did say these things in the House. They were heard by myself and four or five other members who speak Maori. They were interpreted into English; the honorable gentleman did not get up and deny them; and I think I was fairly warranted in concluding that there was some truth in them. I beg to draw your attention, Sir, to the fact that the report of the speech of the Native member as printed is utterly incorrect, entirely apart from the question between the honorable gentleman and myself.

Mr. SEDDON.—In reference to this matter, Sir, I wish to say that a gentleman has been accused of misinterpreting what has been said by a Maori member, and, as that gentleman's mouth is closed, he being an interpreter in the House, I think it is only fair that the matter should be thoroughly gone into; and, for that reason, I call your attention to the statement made by the Premier. I think it is only right to young members like myself and others that, where an aspersion of this character has been cast upon the interpreter, it should be probed to the bottom.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I wish to notify to the House that I have appointed Mr. Henry Hadfield as an extra Maori interpreter, and that he sits on the Government bench next to Mr. Tomoana.

Mr. HALL.—I now ask the House to bear with me for a few moments while I complete the statement which I commenced on Friday last. I then stated the intention of the Government with regard to the subject of electoral reform. The Bills which embody the views of the Government have, thanks to the great exertions of the Attorney-General, been prepared. Some of them have been already circulated, and the rest, I

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hope, will be in the hands of members shortly. They will be seen to differ considerably from the proposals of the late Government, their machinery being more in conformity with that which was proposed by the present Attorney-General in 1878. I propose to ask the House to give me leave to introduce three Bills to-day, and I shall give notice to ask for leave to introduce the remainder to-morrow, so that they may be at once before the country. I think the House will admit that we have lost no time whatever in bringing down our measures. We are ready to put them before the country at the earliest possible moment. With regard to the land legislation, we propose to go on with the Bill introduced by the late Government, introducing into it sundry alterations which appear to us desirable for the promotion of settlement. Those alterations are not ready, but they will be, I hope, by to-morrow or Thursday. With regard to finance I will not trouble the House at any length now, because it is the intention of my honorable colleague the Colonial Treasurer, upon asking for leave to introduce a Bill to amend "The Public Revenues Act, 1878," to make a statement of the financial position of the colony. It will perhaps be convenient to honorable members generally, and it will be an act of consideration towards myself, if he is allowed to make his statement at half-past seven o'clock this evening. I think the House will agree to that. With regard to Native affairs, my honorable friend the Native Minister hopes to make a full statement upon that subject on Thursday next, or, at the latest, on Friday. He has exerted himself to the utmost to be ready with that statement at as early a date as possible, but it is not possible for him to make it before Thursday or Friday. I will state, briefly and generally, what our views are on some of the principal features of this question. As was stated at the interview to which I have just referred, we believe, with regard to the Maori members of the Executive Council, that they have not yet been made as useful to the country as they might be. They have not had given to them such a defined position as it is desirable they should have. They have been—not to use too strong a term—mere nonentities, or, at any rate, comparative nonentities. We propose to introduce a Bill giving them a definite title, and, if not defining, at any rate indicating, the duties which they shall be called upon to perform. We believe this will be acceptable to themselves, and will very much assist the European Native Minister in the administration of affairs. With regard to the west coast of this Island, we regret to find that—as no doubt the House is well aware—a very large expenditure is going on, consequent on preparations for defence, which are no doubt necessary. We do not deny the necessity of them—that they are necessary for the safety of a considerable part of that district. We are suffering not only from that expense, but more largely still from the loss inflicted upon the settlers by the comparative suspension of their industrial occupations—the operations of the settlers of a large portion of the colony having

become almost paralyzed. We feel bound to exert ourselves to put an end to this state of things, both by our duty to the colony and by the admiration which we feel, not only for the public spirit which has been evinced by the settlers throughout this trying crisis, but also because of the remarkable forbearance which they have shown under circumstances of considerable provocation. The Government is aware that allegations have been made to the effect that these difficulties arise to a very considerable extent from unfulfilled promises made for some time past by Government agents, and that the Natives themselves have just cause for complaint under that head. The Government are of opinion that it is desirable that this subject should be inquired into by a Royal Commission composed not of subordinate officers of the Government, but of gentlemen whose character and reputation will give weight to their decisions and opinions with the people of both races. So far as we have been able to ascertain, these complaints as to unfulfilled promises do not extend to that part of the district which is called the Waitemate Plains—they really refer to other parts of the district; but the whole subject will be fully inquired into. The Government have a confident hope, based upon the best information, that they will be able, at an early date, to put an end to this serious state of things, without running any risk of actual disturbance. The Native Minister, as I have already said, will make a full statement upon this and other subjects at an early date. The Native land question is divided into two branches—the question of the Native Land Court, for ascertaining the title, and the question of the terms upon which Native lands shall be allowed to be alienated. With regard to the Court, we believe that its machinery is cumbersome and complicated: the law is spread over a great many Acts, and is generally in an unsatisfactory state. Even if we cannot deal with the second branch of the question during the present session, we propose to put the ascertainment of title to Native lands upon a better footing. With regard to the alienation of Native land, that question is in a very unsatisfactory condition. Honorable members who have taken part in the public affairs of this colony will remember that three or four years ago the result of the operations of the Government, purchasing Native land, had proved so unsatisfactory, that it was almost unanimously determined to put an end to the system. The honorable member for the Thames made that announcement in his first Statement as Native Minister. That resolution seems practically to have been revoked, and, instead of the Government retiring from the purchase of Native land, their preemptive right has been practically resumed. It is not formally resumed, it is true, but it has been resumed in a way which enables the Government to take the land in some cases and to waive the right to purchase in others. When we are placed in possession of full information as to the result of the Government land-purchase operations, and time has been given to let it become thoroughly known outside, the public will be very much dissatisfied with the result

—as dissatisfied as they have been on former occasions — and the Government will be requested to retire as speedily as possible from the position it has lately taken up. A proposal was mentioned, in the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, to create a provision by which the Government should sell the land on behalf of the Maoris. That proposal originated with Sir William Martin, and was adopted by Sir Julius Vogel. It is by no means the first time it has been heard of. The Government look very favourably indeed upon that proposal, believing that it may be productive of much good, if carefully carried out, not only to the Maori, but to the European settler: I cannot say at the present moment whether we shall be able, during the present session, to complete a scheme to give effect to the suggestion. There are only two other points upon which I wish to trouble the House. We propose at once to give instructions by which what we believe to be a great mistake, to say the least of it, will be put an end to. Without incurring any additional expense, we propose that the Government advertisements shall be given to the newspapers in such a manner as to insure fair and ample publicity, and shall be distributed without any reference to the political opinions of those papers. I have reason to believe that, whatever Government is in office, that must be done. The only other point to which I wish to refer is as to the “Hinemoa,” and the large expense which has been incurred of late in keeping up that vessel. While the present state of affairs on the West Coast continues, we do not propose to take any decided measures in the matter; but, as soon as the time arrives when there will be no reasonable probability that the steamer will be required for the conveyance of troops, we shall lay up one of the two steamers. We reserve for consideration whether it is advisable to dispose of one of them; but, in the meantime, one will be kept for all the purposes for which a Government steamer should properly be employed; and for other duties, should it be necessary, we can provide at a much less expense than the “Hinemoa” has cost of late. I will only add that we are anxious to go on with the business with the least possible delay, and to put our views fairly before the country.

QUALIFICATION OF ELECTORS BILL.

Mr. HALL.—I now ask leave to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to electors qualified to vote at elections of members of the House of Representatives. The manner in which the Government propose to deal with this question is to divide the subject into five or six parts, as was done in 1868—not to put into one Bill the whole question of the qualification and registration of electors, the conduct of elections, and so on; but to deal with the franchise in one Bill, which will be comparatively short, to put into a second the provision to be made for the Maori representation, and into a third the provision to be made for the registration of electors. The subject of the regulation of elections will be put into a fourth Bill, the prevention of corrupt practices at elections into a fifth,

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and the manner of dealing with election petitions into a sixth. We believe that that will be a more convenient method of dealing with the whole question, and it will be safer: because, when the whole subject is included in one large Bill, one honorable member objects to one part of the Bill, another to another, and in the aggregation of these objections the Bill itself runs increased risk; whereas, if it is divided into parts, there is a fairer chance of each Bill becoming law. The measures we propose to introduce are those introduced last session by the present Attorney-General. With regard to the franchise, as mentioned by the honorable member for Christchurch City in moving the Address in Reply, it cannot fairly be stated that the present franchise is not a liberal one. Under the Constitution Act a vote is given to every person possessed of freehold property of the value of £50. Every leaseholder and every householder has the right to vote, and to that has been added a lodgers' franchise, a miners' franchise, and a measure which gives a vote to every person who pays rates, however small. Practically at the present time we have not an illiberal franchise. I do not think that can fairly be denied; and the proof of it is this: that a larger proportion of the male population of this colony is on the electoral roll than is the case in any of the Australian Colonies, where the franchise is said to be more liberal. We believe, however, that it is desirable to make an alteration. One of the main reasons for dissatisfaction with the present system has arisen not from the franchise itself, but from the difficulty in the way of exercising it, and the difficulty of registration. I am bound to say that I do not think the people themselves have taken as much trouble in the matter as it was desirable they should have done; and I also think the Government might, from time to time, have provided greater facilities for registration. Before I go further, perhaps the House will allow me to allude to statements that have been made as to my opinions on this question. Scraps have been quoted from my speeches in this regard, which were very imperfect and very unfair. The view I have always taken of the matter is this: How can we get the best government? Whatever system tends to that end, it is our duty to adopt it. I arrive at exactly the same result as honorable members who like, perhaps, a more popular view of this question; but I have never been willing to pretend that my reasons are what they are not. I have never shrunk from expressing my opinions because I was at all afraid that it would make me unpopular, and I have no reason whatever to regret the result. I thank the House for allowing me to make these few remarks, because I scarcely think justice was done me when the extracts were read on a recent occasion. Sir, we propose to extend the franchise, and to give increased facilities for registration. We propose that every man shall have the right to vote who has lived one year in the colony and six months in the electoral district for which he wishes to register. We propose that there shall thus be a recognition of the principle of manhood

suffrage; and, in order that there may be a reasonable recognition of the claims of property, we propose that every man who owns a freehold of the value of £25 shall have the right to vote. That, we believe, is not only a reasonable recognition of property, but a concession to a class of small freeholders who, in any country, are a valuable part of the population. We propose that this shall be confined to the European population. The manner in which we intend to provide for the Maori population will be stated hereafter. We also propose that the task of registering shall not be thrown on the electors themselves, but that Government officers shall be appointed in each electoral district whose duty it shall be to see that every man who has a right to vote shall have his name placed on the roll. I shall refer to the question more at length when I come to deal with the Registration of Electors Bill. My statement to-day must be of a more general character. We propose, as I say, that there shall be a Government officer in each electoral district, whose duty it shall be to see that every man who has a right to be on the electoral roll shall have his name placed there; who shall also see that the rolls are corrected from time to time; that every opportunity shall be given to the public to examine the rolls; and, if there is any objection to names on the roll, or any improper insertion of names, the case may be tried at once in the Resident Magistrate's Court. We think that this provision will meet the case of miners, most of whom will be residents in districts, and therefore on the roll. It will also get out of the difficulty with regard to ratepayers. Although that is theoretically a very good means of getting names placed on the electoral roll, still, when put into practice, there are considerable difficulties in the way. For instance, the boundaries of road districts for which the ratepayers' roll is made up are in very many cases not coterminous with the electoral district, and there are other difficulties, so that practically it is exceedingly difficult to use the ratepayers' rolls for putting names on the electoral rolls for this House. Under the system we propose, which is very simple, all that difficulty will be avoided. We do not think it will lead the country into any further expense than attends the present system, because it will relieve us from the large cost of advertising, which is very heavy. We believe that the amount saved in this respect will very nearly cover the cost of a much more perfect system. That is the substance of the Bill which I now ask leave to introduce—the Qualification of Electors Bill.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Sir, before you put that question, I desire to ask your ruling as to whether I shall be in order in moving an amendment. Perhaps I had better read that amendment. It is as follows: "That this House, while determined to pass, during the present session, a measure to amend the electoral laws of the colony, declines to allow leave to introduce this Bill until it has been shown that the present Ministry possesses the confidence of the House."

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think that amendment would be in order. It is stated in *May*, "Amendments have occasionally been made to a

question for leave to bring in a Bill, by which its proposed title has been altered." An amendment cannot go beyond that, at the present stage of the proceedings.

Mr. MACANDREW.—If it is not competent for me to move that amendment, I can see nothing else for it but to negative every Government motion. Not that we object to the measures themselves on their merits, but we think they should be negated until such time as it is determined whether the Government possess the confidence of the House or not. It will be recollected that on Friday last this House by a majority decided not to proceed with the second reading of the Triennial Parliaments Bill, with a view of enabling the position of the Government to be determined before any important business was proceeded with. I had hoped the Government would have seen their way to give an opportunity to-day for bringing forward the motion of which I gave notice, so as to bring the question to an issue at once. I may say that this side of the House is exceedingly anxious to proceed with the business of the country at once, and the best evidence of the determination of this side that talk shall give place to work is the selection of myself—one of the non-talkers—to move the motion of no-confidence. I may say, however, that there is one measure of the Government which I am prepared to accept—the Public Revenues Bill. I should not be prepared, nor would other honorable members on this side of the House be prepared, to negative that Bill, because I understand it is a matter of urgency, and possibly the public credit may be affected by it. We are, therefore, prepared at once to go into that question, if necessary; but, with regard to all the others, I see nothing for it but to negative every one, until such time as the House has determined whether the Government possess its confidence or not.

Mr. PITT.—I should like to ask whether, if the measure now proposed to be introduced by the Government is negated by the Opposition, a motion for the introduction of a similar Bill can be brought forward this session.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the House refuse leave to introduce this Bill now, it cannot be introduced again this session.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I find in the latest edition of *May*,—

"It is to be observed that, when the question for the first reading of a Bill is negated, the House merely determines that the Bill shall not now be read; and the question may therefore be repeated on a future day, as in the case of the County Elections Bill, 1852, where it was twice negated. After the first vote of the House, the Bill was no longer among the Orders of the day; but notice was given, and a motion made, to read the Bill a first time."

I apprehend the same rule will apply to the introduction of a Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I am quite aware of the rule with regard to the first, second, or third reading of a Bill; but that is not the question at present before the House. In the case of the first, second, or third reading of a Bill the question put is, That the Bill be now read a first,

second, or third time; and the House will, if it thinks fit, decide that it shall not be *now* read a first, second, or third time, which does not prevent the question being put again at some future time. In the present case the Premier has asked leave to introduce a Bill, and the word *now* does not come into the question, so that, if leave be refused, the motion cannot be again brought forward this session.

Mr. GISBORNE.—Might I call your attention to this point, Sir: Leave is asked to introduce a Bill of which we have no copy. If we negative that motion, surely it does not prevent some Bill different from that now sought to be introduced being brought in afterwards. It does not prevent another Bill relating to the qualification of electors being introduced.

Mr. HALL.—Speaking to the point of order, Sir, my motion is for leave to introduce a Bill defining the qualifications of electors for members of the House of Representatives. That is a definite motion. There is no Bill before the House, and the question is whether, if the House now refuses leave to introduce such a Bill, that motion can be brought on again this session. On that point, I submit myself entirely to your ruling, Sir.

Mr. PYKE.—I should like to know whether, if the calamity should occur which is so much feared by the present leader of the Government, there is not already on the Order Paper a Bill relating to this subject with which the House can proceed.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is my duty not to allow a resolution to be introduced which is substantially the same as a resolution which has already been negatived during the same session. Therefore I do not think that another resolution substantially the same as that now before the House can be introduced this session, if the present one be negatived.

Sir G. GREY.—Upon the first point referred to you, Sir, I would submit that we are an independent Legislature, that we are acting under a Constitution not similar to the Constitution of Great Britain, and that we have a right to establish precedents for ourselves. We are quite capable of doing so; and I think we ought to bear in mind the great crisis in which the colony is at present, with a Government sitting on those benches in defiance of the wishes of Parliament—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I understand the honorable member to rise to a point of order. That being so, he cannot proceed to criticise the position of the Government. I would also point out to the honorable member that we have a Standing Order which says,—

“In all cases not hereinbefore provided for, Mr. Speaker shall decide, taking for his guide the rules, forms, and usages of the House of Commons, so far as the same can be applied to the proceedings of this House.”

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, that is the very point. I deny the application of that rule—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I am bound to follow the usages of the House of Commons, in the absence of rules of this House on specific points.

Sir G. GREY.—In so far as applicable to the

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circumstances of this country. I say a question like the present has never arisen in the House of Commons or here, and I think I have a right to bring that point forward. We have never before had an Address sent to the Governor in which the House declared that it had no confidence in the Government as constituted—

Mr. SPEAKER.—That is not a point of order.

Sir G. GREY.—The real question before us is, that the liberties of the colony for all future time are to depend upon a technical point of order. I apprehend there must be some way in which I can raise the discussion. I am perfectly independent myself. I am in no way interested in the change of Government. I am to gain nothing by it myself: that is very well understood. But where I feel a wrong is being done to the whole community—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must say the honorable member is out of order in addressing these remarks to the House. There was only a point of order before me just now. Having decided that point of order, it would not be becoming in me to allow my ruling to be further questioned.

Sir G. GREY.—I will move the adjournment of the House, for the purpose of putting myself in order, and then I can speak to anything.

Mr. SPEAKER.—No. In moving the adjournment of the House, a member is not at liberty to speak on any subject set down for discussion on the Paper. There is that restriction on speaking to a motion for adjournment. The honorable gentleman is at liberty to move the adjournment of the House; but it will not be competent for him, under cover of the motion for adjournment, to discuss any Order of the day or notice of motion that stands upon the Order Paper, as the House has appointed another time for their consideration.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Would it be competent for me to move that leave be not now given to introduce the Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is competent to move an adjournment until this evening.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Quite so; but I move that leave be not now given, just as might be done in the case of refusing to now read the Bill a first time. We do not deny the naked proposition, but simply say, “Wait.”

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the proper course would be to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Then I move the adjournment of the debate until half-past seven o'clock, for the express purpose of giving the honorable gentleman an opportunity of making his Financial Statement. We want to have those figures before us, and, in fact, the country wants to have them. For my part, I will not take any action which will shut him out from that chance. I desire to move that this debate be adjourned until half-past seven o'clock; and I do so on the express condition that, after meeting at half-past seven, and giving the honorable gentleman an opportunity of making his Financial Statement, this debate shall be resumed.

Mr. HALL.—Will the honorable gentleman move that the debate be now adjourned, with the

view of the Financial Statement of my honorable friend being taken at half-past seven o'clock?

Mr. SHEEHAN.—No. I move the adjournment of the debate until half-past seven, undertaking to move, then, a further adjournment until the Statement is given.

Mr. HALL.—On the understanding that the Statement is given at half-past seven o'clock?

Mr. SHEEHAN.—So long as we take this debate afterwards.

Mr. HALL.—I quite agree to that.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I understand, in that case, that we adjourn this debate until half-past seven.

Mr. HALL.—It is simply this: The honorable gentleman moves that this debate be now adjourned, and he will then move the adjournment until half-past seven, it being understood that at half-past seven we proceed to the twelfth notice of motion, in order to have the Financial Statement made.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—It being also understood that, after that is done, we can bring on this debate. That is quite sufficient for us.

Mr. HALL.—Leaving it to the House to decide it then.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I am quite prepared to move that the House adjourn until half-past seven. Of course I cannot make that addition to it; but, if honorable gentlemen on that side will not agree to accept these terms, I will alter the terms of my proposition, and compel them to accept it. I do not want to do that. I want to act fairly. If the other side will agree to accept the proposal to adjourn until half-past seven, on condition that we adjourn further until No. 12 comes up and the Financial Statement is made, then I will support that, and move it myself if necessary. If it is opposed by any member on our side, I will vote along with them, if they will agree to that, and allow No. 12 to come up, in order to have the Financial Statement, and then go back to this debate.

Major ATKINSON.—That is, the honorable gentleman proposes we should intercept this debate at half-past seven, with the view of taking the Financial Statement.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Yes; on condition that we go on with this debate afterwards.

Major ATKINSON.—We could not prevent it. The debate will be simply intercepted. The House might order me to make the Financial Statement at the present moment, and then the debate would be intercepted. I presume the debate would be immediately afterwards called on, being next on the Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I understand the honorable gentleman wishes to adjourn the debate until half-past seven, and, when the time comes to resume the debate, then that he will move a further adjournment until No. 12 is disposed of.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—On that ground, I move the adjournment of the debate until half-past seven o'clock.

Mr. HALL.—If this debate is adjourned, the House will adjourn until half-past seven. I accept that.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—As it seems likely we are to adjourn until half-past seven o'clock, I wish

to call attention to another matter, in order that Mr. Speaker may use his judgment whether or not it is worth consideration before the House meets again. I understand it is a well-established rule that, when business has been brought forward and put upon the Order Paper, the same business cannot be again put on the Order Paper until the original matter has been discharged therefrom. Now, leave has already been given to introduce a Bill to amend the qualification of electors in this colony. It is a Bill on the Paper making provision for the representation of the people in the General Assembly. That Bill embraces the whole purport and tenor of the Bill leave to introduce which is now asked for. That being so, I hold that the first Order asked for from the Ministerial benches, for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to electors, cannot be gone on with until the other one is called up for judgment, and is executed. The course for Ministers to take would have been to put up the late Government Bill on the Order Paper, dispose of, and ask the House to slaughter it. But, not having done so, they cannot bring in another Bill for the same object. I do not now ask you, Sir, to give your ruling, but wish to give you an opportunity of looking at the Bills, as I intend to call your attention to the same matter at half-past seven o'clock.

Mr. HALL.—The contention of the honorable member for Mount Ida amounts to this: that, when once a Bill on a particular subject has been introduced and put on the Order Paper, no other member can introduce a Bill on the same subject. That is opposed to all parliamentary practice. I have known cases where three or four Bills on the same subject have been before the House at the same time. Therefore, even if the Representation Bill were the Bill that the honorable gentleman supposes, which it is not, I contend that there is nothing to prevent every member of the House also introducing such a Bill on the same subject.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I will look into the matter, and give my opinion.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I would like to understand distinctly your ruling on the point as regards the introduction of this Bill. Do I rightly understand your ruling to be that, if leave is refused to introduce this Bill, it cannot be again introduced this session?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes.

Mr. SEDDON.—But, on the other hand, that, if the first reading was asked for by the Government after it had been introduced, then it could be negatived by the House and reintroduced by the Government?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes.

Mr. PYKE.—Sir, I think honorable members should understand clearly—especially as there are so many new members—what the effect of that decision will be. Following up the remark of the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon), I must also ask whether, if leave be not given to introduce the Bill of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, we cannot still proceed with the Bill already before the House, and set down for second reading.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot give a decision on that point until I look at the other Bill.

Mr. SHEPHARD.—Even if leave to introduce a Bill were refused, could we not at a subsequent period of the session suspend the Standing Orders, so that leave might be given to introduce the same Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes, I think so.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned until half-past seven o'clock p.m.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—It was on my motion that the debate on the first notice of motion was postponed this afternoon, to enable the Colonial Treasurer to make his Financial Statement to the House at half-past seven o'clock. I propose, with the approval of the House, that the debate stand adjourned until after Notice of Motion No. 12 has been dealt with, so as to enable the Statement of the Colonial Treasurer to be made. When that Statement is made I presume that the House will go back to the consideration of the first notice of motion.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC REVENUES BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, the circumstances under which I am addressing you this evening are of so exceptional a character, and the demands of my honorable friends opposite so very imperious, that I have been obliged to disregard what I, for one, deem a very wise rule of this House—that the Financial Statement, or rather the statement of the finances of the year, should be submitted by the Government to this House in a carefully-prepared document. I do not at all believe in the plan of the Treasurer coming down and making what is called an ordinary speech on finance. To my mind, the plan that we have adopted—in common, I think, with the other Australian Colonies—of submitting to the House a Financial Statement in such a form that honorable gentlemen can readily understand our finances—is a far preferable mode of dealing with the question to speaking upon it as I am obliged under the present circumstances to speak to-night. Sir, our financial position has not been dealt with at all for some fifteen months. The colony is, I venture to say, in a state of complete darkness as to our real financial position. It is not my business upon the present occasion to ask why the colony is in this position; but I take it that what the House desires now is that I should give to it a broad outline of the finances, so that honorable gentlemen may be enabled easily to comprehend what are its main features, and so determine in their minds the mode in which they will deal with the difficulties I shall present to them. As, Sir, we have had no statement of the finances for some fifteen months, I must ask you to bear with me while I take you back to the beginning of the financial year 1878-79. The then Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Ballance, estimated that he would begin that year with a surplus of £120,468. I may say here that I shall quote round numbers

Mr. Pyke

all through in my address to-night, in order that honorable members may catch them the more easily; and in the report of my speech I shall insert the correct figures. The honorable gentleman estimated the balance with which he would begin the year at £120,468. The assets realized were rather less than was anticipated, and the liabilities proved to be somewhat more. The actual amount realized was £116,844. The estimate was very accurate, the difference being a mere trifle in comparison with the large sums that we have to deal with. The expenditure proposed by the late Government for the year 1878-79 was £4,210,436. It will be in the recollection of honorable gentlemen who were in the last Parliament that a table was presented by the last Colonial Treasurer, Sir George Grey, at the end of the last session, indicating the savings which had been effected upon the votes. The total expenditure, as given in the table, was £3,652,048, showing an apparent saving of £558,387. But this table is entirely misleading without proper explanation, the truth being that there was no saving at all in the ordinary sense during the year. In the first place, we must take off from the apparent saving of £558,387 the outstanding liabilities, almost the whole of which have been since paid. Some of them are still outstanding; but, practically, all the outstanding liabilities have been paid. The first thing we must do is to take off the outstanding liabilities, amounting to £348,219. Having taken these off, honorable gentlemen will find that the balance of the savings is made up of such items as these—I will not enumerate them all: Of such items as £100,000 voted out of the surplus balance of the year before last in aid of the Public Works Fund. Honorable members will recollect that it was proposed to transfer a sum of £100,000 from the consolidated revenue to the Public Works Fund, and a great flourish was made of that proposal; but unfortunately it was never accomplished—the £100,000 was never paid over, and it appeared in that table as a saving. There is also another item of £74,031, which was put down as the amount required to pay the 20 per cent. of Land Fund, the Land Fund having fallen much short of the estimate. That sum of £74,031 was not required to be paid. Another item of £46,188 was an over-estimate of the interest required, and therefore was not used. I say that honorable members, upon reference to the table I shall place upon the table of this House, will see that nearly the whole of the supposed balance is made up of items similar to those which I have named. Now, the total payments within and on account of the year amount to £4,000,268. I will presently refer to one or two classes of expenditure to which I think the attention of the House should be especially called. I now come to the revenue for the year. Honorable gentlemen will recollect that it was estimated to amount to £4,045,537, and that it actually did realize £3,751,598. The decrease arose almost entirely from a decrease in the land revenue, amounting to the sum of £359,947. Receipts specially applicable also fell off by £30,430.

There was, however, a net increase in the ordinary revenue of £96,439, derived chiefly from Customs, stamps, and railway receipts. The total receipts of the year, instead of being £4,045,437, amounted only to £3,751,598, through, as I have just said, the great falling-off in the land revenue. Now, taking the revenue of the year, including the balance of £116,844 brought forward from the previous year, and subtracting it from the expenditure, honorable members will find that at the end of the year we had a deficit of £131,824; and this sum we shall have to provide for during this year. Looked at in another way, we began the year with £116,844 to our credit, and we ended it with £131,824 to our debit. So that, looking upon the year as something complete in itself, our receipts did not come up to our expenditure by £248,668. I hope honorable gentlemen will bear these facts in mind, because they will then be able better to understand the figures I am going to submit for this year. I should point out here that this deficit of £131,824 may be said to be fairly reducible by £50,000 of land-tax, which the late Colonial Treasurer estimated to obtain during the last year, but which was not collected; but, of course, if I were to take it off there, I should then not be able to count it as revenue for the present year, and, as it is revenue for the present year, I have treated it in that way. But I wish to call the attention of the House to the fact, because, when these estimates were made, it was calculated that this £50,000 from the land-tax would come in as revenue, and therefore would reduce the deficit. I should like now, Sir, to call the attention of the House to one or two questions of general expenditure, and my object in doing so is to show that we are not exercising any economy whatever in our public service. By that I mean that, although we have in this House made a great deal of talk about it—although Governments have been turned out because they were supposed to be extravagant, and others have come in pledging themselves to effect great reductions—the fact is, that we have not retrenched in any one respect that I can find out; and I am going to read these tables to the House, in order that honorable members may see that what I say is accurate. I do it because before I have sat down honorable members will see that we shall have to take some very vigorous steps in order to place our finance in that position which the finance of the colony ought to be in. Taking what I may call the nine large departments—omitting such departments as Education, Railways, and Surveys, which could not be very well taken in, for obvious reasons, but including all the other departments—Law and Justice, Postal, Telegraph, Customs, Marine, Native, Militia and Volunteers, Constabulary, and Public Domains and Buildings—taking these nine departments, I find that the amount voted by this House for those services for 1877-78 was £866,216. I find that the expenditure of that year was about £10,000 more on those departments than this House had voted: in other words, it was £876,397. The estimates for the same departments for 1878-79, as passed by this House, amounted to £903,857

—a gradual increase, honorable gentlemen will observe, notwithstanding all our professions of economy; and they will not be gratified when I further tell them that the actual expenditure on those departments, instead of being £903,857, was, as a matter of fact, £953,671 for the last year. So much, then, for economy in those branches of the service where, if it was to be effected at all, it ought to have been effected. In other words, the expenditure on these nine departments has risen from £866,216, in 1877-78, to £953,671 for the year which has just passed. And now, Sir, let us look at the Native Department. We shall find that this department in 1876-77 cost, including the Civil list, £34,124; in 1877-78 it cost £43,047; in 1878-79 it cost £58,336. So that all through the departments the increase has been—I can hardly say gradual, but, rather, very considerable. In the second year the increase in the Native Department was apparently almost entirely for Native schools; and that, so far, is satisfactory: no one will begrudge that expenditure supposing the schools have been conducted properly, as to which it is not now my business to inquire. But there is also this significant fact, with regard to the Native Department: that, whereas the salaries the year before last were £19,014, last year they were £15,321; while the contingencies had risen from £4,893, in 1876-77, to £16,741 last year; that is to say, the control is being gradually taken out of the hands of this House—the habit is growing up of expending all this money upon contingencies, instead of submitting each item to the vote of this House. This is a question which I hope the House will take into its serious consideration. I hope it will carefully examine into this matter, and see how far the expenditure can be properly checked. For myself, I have not the slightest doubt it can be largely reduced with great public advantage. I might here incidentally remark that such expenditure as took place at the Kopua meeting is not, in my opinion, advisable at all. That meeting, the House might like to know, cost the country some £4,500, and the Waitara meeting cost over £1,000. Such then, Sir, is the general result of the last year—an actual deficit to be provided for of £131,824; an actual deficit on the transactions of the year—if the year were taken by itself—of £248,668. There were issued during the year, and paid off at the end of the year, deficiency bills to the amount of £184,000. I merely mention this as a transaction which has occurred: it does not affect the balance one way or the other. I now come to the present year 1879-80. The estimated expenditure, as left by the late Government, deducting from it a sum of £140,000 for contingent advances, which it is proposed to place upon loan, amounts to £3,974,034. This is exclusive, also, of a sum of about £125,000, which the Government merely collects and pays over to local bodies. I have omitted that from both sides of the account, in order to obtain greater simplicity. In quoting the estimate of expenditure as left by the late Government, I do not in any way wish to commit them to that expenditure. I am merely stating what I found in the office. Nor do I wish to commit the present Government to it; because honorable members will quite understand that t

is impossible that I could have satisfactorily examined it or gone through it, so as to be able to speak with sufficient certainty to be committed to it. But I have given it what attention I could, and I say at once that, as far as I can see, there is nothing unreasonable in it, and that, if we are to continue the present system, I do not think we shall be able to reduce it to any great extent. This expenditure includes £1,325,373 for sinking fund and interest, £279,257 payable as subsidies, and £63,540 being 20 per cent. on the Land Fund. I might perhaps be permitted to remark here, with regard to this amount payable for sinking fund and interest, that it is to me a matter of very great regret that the late Government did not see their way to bring into operation the Consolidated Stock Act. I believe that, had that Act been brought into force at the time when the Government of which I had the honor to be a member was turned out of office, we should already have been deriving very considerable advantages from it. But, unfortunately, the one man who had taken the deepest interest in it throughout was not appointed agent until lately, and then only in such a way that it was impossible for him to go heartily into the work, being not at all assured of his position in the matter, or of receiving any co-operation from the Government here. The estimate of revenue, as prepared by the late Government—and this was laid on the table of the House—amounts to £3,442,000. This is made up as follows, taking the classification adopted by the late Treasurer: From taxation, £1,580,000; services rendered, £1,362,000; Land Fund, £500,000. The estimated expenditure, exclusive of the £140,000 for contingent defence, which it is proposed to take out of loan, amounts to £3,974,034; and, if from this we deduct our estimated revenue, we arrive at a deficit for the year of £532,034. If to this we add the deficit with which we began the year, £131,824, we have a total deficit of £663,858 for the present year. I wish I could stop there; but I should not be doing my duty to the House if I were to say that I thought the estimates of revenue prepared by the late Government would be realized. Of course we have the advantage of three months' experience of the year, and are therefore better able to estimate what the revenue will be. I have gone as carefully as I could into the matter, considering the time at my disposal, and I fear the estimate I am about to submit will not be exceeded. We may hope it will be, but, as prudent men of business, I do not think it will be wise to calculate upon receiving more than the estimate I am about to give from our present sources of revenue. I estimate that from taxation we shall receive £1,512,300; for services rendered, £1,301,600; and for land, £380,000, instead of £500,000. I have estimated the Customs revenue at £1,200,000, and the other departments I have reduced a very small amount, leaving the railways as estimated by the department itself. Now, if we take this revenue from the proposed expenditure, and add to it the deficit of £131,824 with which we began the year, and which has to be provided for, we shall find that there is a total deficit on the

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year of £911,958, which must be provided for either by a reduction of expenditure, by increased taxation, or by any other mode which the House may decide upon. The amount is so large that I have no doubt it will take honorable members some time to realize what it means. It means that this House must immediately turn its attention to the finances of the country—it means that not a moment is to be lost in deciding how we are to face our present difficulty. It is not my business now to make any remarks upon the manner in which the deficiency has arisen, or how it should be met: that question will have to be considered when we have finished the unfortunate struggles in which we are now engaged. I conceived that it was my simple duty to submit these facts to the House. And this brings me to the reason for asking that I may be permitted to pass the Bill upon which I am now addressing the House through all stages at one sitting. I may tell the House that when I took possession of the Treasury I found the Public Account in this state: that the receipts for the quarter then just ended did not come up to the payments that had then been made by a sum of £330,000; that the late Government had issued £400,000 of deficiency bills, and had used the whole of the proceeds; that no provision had been made for paying the subsidies which are now due, or for meeting other payments which it is absolutely necessary to make. So soon as I found that this was the position of affairs, I at once, as I was in duty bound, came down to this House to tell it what further relief we wanted, and this Bill is the mode in which the Government think it best to deal with the question. We propose to take power to issue £200,000 deficiency bills temporarily,—for the Act is a temporary Act, as honorable gentlemen will see, if they read it. We propose to issue these bills in order to enable us to carry on the necessary payments during the months of October and November. That is all that amount is calculated to meet. By that time I hope the House will have determined how the deficiency is to be dealt with. It seemed to the Government that it would have been improper to do more in the present state of matters than to submit a temporary remedy, merely to provide the cash to go on with, until the House had determined how the matter should be finally disposed of. That was my reason for asking the House to pass this Bill. I find that during these two months the probable receipts will not equal the certain expenditure by the sum of £150,000 or £200,000. And now we come to the position of the Public Works Account. We had a short and, as I think the House considers, a satisfactory statement of the general position of this account from the Minister for Public Works last session; but I propose to mention the transactions of last year, in order that honorable members may get the matter thoroughly into their minds. Well, Sir, we began the year 1878-79 with a credit to the Public Works Account of £2,056,000. Some of us then hoped that that Fund was going to be augmented by some £700,000 which it was proposed to get from the Land Fund, and by £100,000 which it

was proposed to take from the Consolidated Fund—from the surplus of the year before last. I need hardly tell the House that no relief was received from the Land Fund, and that the £100,000 was not paid over, so that we only have the £2,056,000 at the disposal of the Public Works Department. We began this year with a credit in the Public Works Fund of £506,205 nominally; but, of this, £298,543 was advances outstanding, which, as honorable gentlemen are aware, is really money paid away and not accounted for; so that we really only began with £207,662 to the good. We actually spent during the last year £1,601,207. Now, Sir, the expenditure for the last quarter—and I wish particularly to call the attention of honorable members to this point, because we are now spending the new five-million loan—the expenditure for the September quarter, including advances outstanding at that date, which is money spent, is £712,395; so that we had actually spent, by the 30th September, £504,733 of the five-million loan. I find, upon inquiry, that we have entered into engagements, from which there is no escape whatever, for which we must find £733,552 by the 31st of December next, and that there are further engagements upon which we shall have to pay £921,818 more by the 30th of next June. In other words, by the 30th of June, upon works and services to which we are already committed, and without including any new works or contracts, we shall have spent £2,160,103 of the new five-million loan.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Quite a mistake.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course I speak subject to correction. The honorable gentleman says these figures are incorrect, but I can only go by the figures furnished to me from his own office by his Under Secretary and other officers; and I may add that these figures have been carefully gone through by myself and the Secretary to the Treasury. I myself asked the Under Secretary for Public Works whether these were all absolute engagements for contracts entered into, and was informed that such was the fact. That seemed to me sufficient authority for the statements I have made. I was, of course, very much startled when I found that the amount was so large, and I took a good deal of pains to see whether I could not fairly state it at a less amount; but I found, on questioning the officers in whose department the expenditure was to be made, that such an amount would be required if effect were given to present engagements. Included in this £2,160,103 is £200,000 for the purchase of Native lands. Of this we have already spent £36,561, and we are engaged to spend up to December next £84,500 more. That, the department assures me, is also necessary. And we have a further liability upon these lands—unless we are prepared to abandon them—and which we are apparently engaged to fulfil, amounting to £957,000, or, in round numbers, to nearly £1,000,000 more, to be provided for the purchase of Native lands. We have also, for contracts for public works now let, to provide after June next £128,815 more than I have stated. Of course it is not for me at the present time to say anything

with regard to the policy of continuing to purchase these lands, or of completing the engagements already commenced. That will be for the House to discuss presently. It is only my duty now to lay before the House the facts which I have obtained from the department; and I have simply to say that nearly £1,000,000 more will be required after the end of next June to complete transactions now under negotiation. Our position then is this: we have actually spent up to the end of September half a million of the loan. We have engaged to spend by Christmas £700,000 more, and we have engaged to spend by June next £2,000,000 of that loan. And this, Sir, before we know whether it is possible to raise the loan—before we have the slightest news from Home as to whether it is likely we shall get the money. We have so conducted our finances that we have not considered it wrong or unadvisable to pledge the credit of the colony in this way without the slightest knowledge of whether we can meet our engagements. That, to my mind, is a most serious position for the colony to take up. It is beginning entirely at the wrong end. We are bound, if we are to maintain our credit, first of all to be sure that we have the money before we proceed to spend it. Of course it is not for me to say how far we may be successful in raising the whole loan. The credit of the colony, fortunately, has hitherto been very good; but I say nothing can justify us in spending money at this rate before we have got it. Such, then, Sir, is, shortly, the position of our finances at the present time. I will simply say, in conclusion, that I am very much obliged to the House for the patience with which it has heard me. I would the tale I have had to tell were of a more cheerful nature, and that I had been able, as it has been my lot before now to do, to speak of surpluses instead of deficits; but it is clearly my duty to trace in bold outline the present position of our finances, leaving to honorable gentlemen to fill in the picture with information which I shall place, in the shape of tables, in their hands in the course of a few days. The position is undoubtedly an exceedingly grave one. It will require, as I have already said, the serious and immediate attention of this House. If we are not to get into very great difficulties we shall have to give up many things now considered necessary, and turn our attention to providing a remedy for the state of things I have shown to exist. It seems to me that it is absolutely necessary we should, at the present time, have a Government not only capable, but sufficiently strong to govern in the interests of the colony, and not of a party. Whether we can hope by our present party conflicts, whichever way they may end, to get such a Government I leave to honorable gentlemen to decide; but I submit it is the business of all of us now to turn our immediate and serious attention to this great difficulty, and in some way devise some scheme which shall place our finances in a sounder and better position for the future. I beg to move that the Standing Orders be suspended, to enable me to pass the Public Revenues Act Amendment Bill through all its stages to-night.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I trust the House will

accede to the motion. It is a motion which must have proceeded from the late Government if we had been allowed to remain in office. In making these remarks I would wish further to make a few observations in reply to the statements of the honorable gentleman who has just sat down. Firstly, I would say that a statement has been made that for fifteen months the House has been left in total ignorance of the financial condition of the colony. Sir, that is an entire mistake. I would point this out: that during the last fifteen months quarterly accounts have been published in a much more simple form than they had ever previously been submitted to the public of New Zealand. At the close of every quarter these quarterly accounts have been published at an earlier period than ever before, and these quarterly accounts contained a complete financial exposition of the transactions of the colony, so that any single honorable gentleman who had chosen to sit down and add up the figures could have made precisely the Statement which the present Colonial Treasurer has made to the House this evening. Further than that, it is not our fault that a Financial Statement was not made to this House immediately the last Parliament met. Honorable gentlemen will recollect what took place on that occasion. Immediately the Governor's Speech had been made we were met by an amendment to the Address in Reply, and thus all possible opportunity of explanation was taken away from us. And then, when, on the representations of the Government of the day, a dissolution was allowed, this extraordinary and unconstitutional proceeding took place: The Governor of the colony, in granting a dissolution, made an arrangement that no contested motion whatever should be made in the House. The Crown in England has never made a stipulation of that kind. When such a stipulation has been made it has been made by the two parties in the House entering into a mutual agreement for that purpose. That stipulation having been entered into, it absolutely precluded us from making such a Financial Statement as is usually submitted to the House when a Government explain their policy. We could not have brought our policy forward under such circumstances. At that time—and subsequent additions were made to it—a full Financial Statement was prepared to be submitted to the House; but, again, honorable members are aware that, the moment we met this session, a precisely similar course was pursued, and it is not our fault that some week ago—I may say ten days ago—we did not lay a plain and full statement of the financial condition of the colony before the House. Certainly the blame for our not having done so rests with the honorable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. They thought proper to pursue that course. I do not question their right—I do not even question the propriety of it—but I say no blame rests with us in that respect. Then, again, in support of the credit of the colony I would point to a very important fact. Undoubtedly a very large deficiency in the estimated revenue has taken place; but in what items of revenue did that deficiency occur? These extraordinary cir-

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cumstances ought to be pointed out: that, in a period of very great depression, there has been no such falling-off of general revenue in the colony—that is, in the Customs, in the stamp duties, and other duties of that nature and kind—as might have been anticipated in the time of depression that came upon us. It may be said that, seeing the land revenue fell off so much, it was the duty of the Government instantly to have made some large reductions in the public expenditure; but I say that to have followed such a course would have been contrary to true policy. If we had, during the period of depression which has prevailed, suddenly made large reductions in the public expenditure in consequence of the failure of the land revenue, we should have ruined almost every inhabitant of New Zealand, we should have brought distress upon every part of the country, and we should have caused irreparable ruin to the credit of a colony which I believe is in as sound a financial position as any portion of Her Majesty's dominions. Now, Sir, the falling-off in land revenue is to my mind no falling-off whatever in the revenue of the country. Land is a commodity which must ultimately be purchased, and in it we hold a stock of the greatest possible value—a stock for which there must ultimately be very great competition. All men desire to purchase that commodity which we hold. It is a commodity which costs nothing for its storage; it is a commodity which is not injured by keeping, but, on the contrary, increases in value day by day. Therefore I say it is our duty, acting as a wise community, not to bring ruin upon the whole country in consequence of the sale of that commodity having momentarily fallen off. It is a good security for any money which it may be necessary to raise to meet the deficiency arising from a falling-off in the sale of that which must ultimately be of greater value than it is now. I can therefore see no reason whatever for gloomy anticipations. I think it is our duty to do that which the present Colonial Treasurer has asked us to do to-night. We must have followed the same course had we remained in office. We should have brought down a Bill of this nature several days ago; and I should myself have recommended the granting of power to raise money even to a larger amount than it is now proposed should be granted to the Government. I go a degree further, and say that if we had been allowed to conduct the affairs of this country—which we were not allowed to do because the dissolution was given, as I say, in such unconstitutional terms and in so unprecedented a manner that our hands were tied—my colleagues and myself, and the Colonial Treasurer who preceded me, would have been prepared in July last to submit measures which we believed would have provided for the prevailing deficiency. We believed that, if those measures had been passed in July last, funds would now be coming in from new taxes which would have been imposed—taxes which would have been of a just nature, which would not have weighed upon that portion of the community which ought not to contribute to them, and which would have fallen greatly upon persons living out of the country, and drawing large re-

nues from New Zealand. Through causes of which I have already spoken, we were unable then to impose those taxes; from causes known to all of you, we were unable to propose them during the short period of this session in which we held office; and it must be also manifest to all honorable gentlemen that, were we doing it now in this present month, we could not hope to obtain any amount of revenue from such taxes in such a time as would aid the deficiency of the present moment. Therefore the course proposed to be pursued by the present Government is, I believe, a wise one, and one which we intended to adopt. I see that they not only propose to follow our plans in this respect, but that they have already given notice of their intention to introduce to this House one of the very measures by which we proposed to increase the revenue, which was left in our offices prepared to their hands. I can only hope, further, that they will, if they continue in office, follow the course of taxation which we proposed to adopt. If the present Government do continue in office, and if they do adopt that course of taxation, they will receive our warmest support on this side of the House. If they do not, then of course they can look for no support at our hands. I have ventured to trouble the House with these few remarks because I think they are sufficient to explain what has taken place to-night. The details of the questions raised shall be gone into at a future time; but I would wish honorable gentlemen to observe further, in addition to what I have said, that they are told a large sum is to be paid for the purchase of Native lands. That is nothing but a mercantile stock. We are like a mercantile firm purchasing a commodity in which it deals—a commodity for which there is a large demand—a commodity which we ought to purchase to supply the wants of settlers—a commodity which will yield, I am satisfied, in many respects, especially in the revenue raised by taxation from those who are enriched by the occupation of that land, a very considerable profit. Therefore I think that, instead of there being any reason for gloom or for apprehension, the honorable gentleman may rely that, with a careful administration of the affairs of the country, and if wise laws be imposed to meet the deficiency which has taken place, everything will go smoothly on, and the colony will continue to advance in prosperity with that marvellous rapidity which has hitherto been the case.

Mr. JOHNSTON.—I would like to submit to the Treasurer and to the House whether it would not be wiser, in order to apply what the Treasurer calls a temporary remedy to a temporary deficit, to ask the House to authorize the issue of Treasury bills to the amount of £200,000, rather than to place an enormous permanent power in the hands of the Ministry of the day, whoever they may be, as I understand the proposed amending Act will do. I would draw the attention of the House, and more particularly that of new members, to the fact that, under the law as it now stands, the House has given Ministers the power to spend £100,000 a year without appropriation. In addition, Ministers in framing the estimates

take a certain amount for contingencies in each department, amounting in all to £60,000 or £70,000. Further, in the Native Department and the Land Purchase Department the expenditure is very much at the discretion of the Government. Altogether they spend, without check or control by this House, something like £200,000 a year. The House, after giving the Government power to spend this large sum without special appropriation, recognized that the power of spending would not be of much service unless the money was also there. It has borne in mind that possibly the revenue might be insufficient, and has therefore given the Government of the day power to issue bills to an amount not exceeding £100,000 whenever the revenue shall be insufficient not only to make the payments which the House has authorized, but also to defray the discretionary expenditure which the Government may think fit to warrant. It seems to me that the effect of giving the Government power to obtain a large amount of money by merely signing promissory notes, and at the same time giving them power to expend the very large sum of £200,000 without appropriation by the House, is that it does away with all necessity for retrenchment. However short the revenue may be, the Government carries on its expenditure, knowing that behind the revenue which may come in there is always power to sign deficiency bills; and, in addition to doing away with any necessity for retrenchment, it also does away with any control by this House over the expenditure of the country. Now, if the statement of extravagant over-expenditure which we have just heard from the Treasurer suggests anything, it suggests that the House must resume that control; and to my mind the first and most effective step we can possibly take is to curtail very much—if we do not absolutely do away with—this discretionary power that the Ministry of the day now enjoys. Therefore, whilst I recognize that, inasmuch as the cash for requisite disbursements is not now coming in, we must supplement the revenue by signing bills, I submit to the House that it is better to authorize Treasury bills for £200,000—if that is the amount the Treasurer thinks requisite—and be done with them, rather than amend the Public Revenues Act in the way suggested by the Treasurer—rather than increase in that way the present power Ministers of the day have of enlarging the revenue from £400,000 to £600,000, because that is a permanent Act.

Mr. GISBORNE.—No; only until the end of the session.

Mr. JOHNSTON.—It is a permanent Act. The Public Revenues Act, under which deficiency bills are now issued, is a permanent Act. Therefore, thinking as I do that one of the first steps the House should take is to limit this power possessed by the Government of the day, I submit that it is far better to issue Treasury bills, and have done with the matter, than give additional powers. If the Treasurer agrees with me, he can easily amend his motion by moving the suspension of Standing Orders, for the purpose of authorizing the issue of certain Treasury bills.

Major ATKINSON.—If the House will permit me, I could explain that I entirely agree with what has fallen from the honorable member for Manawatu. But he has mistaken the purport of the Bill, which is this: As the House has not considered the question how the deficiency is to be met, it seemed to the Government that it was their duty only to provide temporarily for making the necessary payments. This Bill expires at the end of the present session, and will not affect the general powers of the Government at all. One issue only can take place, and that will be entirely used and disappear before the end of November. Otherwise I entirely agree with the honorable gentleman.

Mr. HALL.—I should not have troubled the House on the present occasion, if it had not been that the remarks which fell from the honorable member for Christchurch City would, if unnoticed, leave an exceedingly wrong and mischievous impression on the House and the country. I would first refer to his denial of the statement made by my honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer that the country has been left practically in ignorance of the state of the finances for the last fifteen months. The honorable gentleman said we had had accounts published in the *Gazette* from time to time. That is perfectly true; but how many men are there in the country, how many men are there in this House, who, without the full explanations which are from time to time afforded in Financial Statements, can from those figures learn the actual financial position of the colony? Are there half a dozen men in this House who, whatever attention they may have paid to those figures, had any idea that the financial position of the colony was such as has been disclosed to-night by my honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer? The honorable gentleman states that it is no fault of his that last session he did not come down with a Financial Statement—that he was precluded from doing so by an act on the part of His Excellency which he called, I think very wrongly, an unconstitutional act. Sir, the act was not, in my humble opinion, by any means unconstitutional. It was a proper constitutional condition, which it was open to His Excellency to attach to the granting of a dissolution. It was a reasonable condition, and such as I believe any prudent man in His Excellency's position ought to attach to it. But, Sir, did that condition really prevent my honorable friend from coming down with a Financial Statement? Was there any condition to that effect? The only complaint on this side of the House was, that he did not make a Financial Statement. He merely laid before us a few tables, and said a few unintelligible words; but he conveyed to this House really no information, and left us practically in that state of darkness from which the Colonial Treasurer has just now relieved us. Sir, the honorable gentleman's remarks, to which I refer as being calculated to be mischievous unless they are noticed, are those by which he tries to make us believe that the country is in a sound financial position. Those remarks, coming from a gentleman who has just left the position of Colonial Treasurer, and of his general standing and reputation, would be cer-

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tain to carry great weight, if unnoticed. He says the colony is not in an unsound position, although the deficit amounts to not less than £912,000. He says that a part of that is owing to the failure in the land revenue, and he tells the House that the rest would have been made up by the measures which his Government were prepared to lay before the House. Now, the principal of these proposals was a Bill to levy an income-tax. I may mention that the late Government took the idea of an income-tax from members of this side of the House. It is the very thing which we have advocated for the last two years—that we should not put a tax on one description of property only and none upon other property and income. I was exceedingly glad to find, on entering office, that the late Government had made some progress towards carrying out our policy; and honorable gentlemen need not be the least afraid, if we continue in office, that we shall drop that Bill. But how far would that relieve us from our difficulty? The amount estimated to be raised by that tax is about £200,000, and our deficit is £900,000; and yet the honorable gentleman would have us go on in a fool's paradise, and believe that the measures which his Government intended to introduce would have relieved us from this alarming—I may say unparalleled—financial condition. The next thing he suggests is, that the enormous expenditure which has been going on for the purpose of acquiring Native land will be a profitable commercial transaction. Now, I hope, before the session closes, that we shall have full figures laid before us showing what has been spent in this colony in the purchase by Government of Native lands on the one side, and what has been recovered by the sale of those lands on the other side; and, from my personal observation of colonial finance, extending over a series of years, I believe that, so far from the purchase of Native lands being a source of profit, it will be found to be a heavy loss. I should have been exceedingly glad to have been able to treat the matter in a more cheerful light; I should have been glad to have been able to take the same cheerful view of things which the honorable member for Christchurch City has done; but I feel bound not to let his remarks pass without saying that I believe we should be misled by the honorable gentleman if we took the same view he has taken; and I cannot sit down without adding that the most gloomy feature of this gloomy prospect appears to me to be the utter inability of the gentlemen opposite to realize the very serious financial position in which we are really placed.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Sir, I quite agree with the honorable member who has just sat down, that the position is a grave one; but I think the honorable member himself was in a position to have realized that when the House met at the beginning of last session. However, instead of asking for a full and complete statement of the finances of the colony, and at the same time some remedy by which they could be placed in a proper position, he gave the Government no opportunity whatever, but at once moved a vote of want of confidence, based on the fact that there was a majority prepared to support his motion. Now, Sir, I have always

thought that these honorable gentlemen, instead of using that majority to prevent the Government from coming down with a proper system of finance, should have waited until the Government had submitted the Financial Statement, and the House had seen the position of the colony. There is no doubt that, if the colony has been kept in darkness for fifteen months, the fault is largely due to those honorable gentlemen. It is nonsense to say that a full and satisfactory statement can be brought down and submitted to the House while a vote of want of confidence is hanging over the heads of Ministers. We know very well that, while their fate is undecided, there is no opportunity given to them or to the Treasurer to go exhaustively into the finances of the colony; and, Sir, this is the cause, this the reason, why the financial position of the colony has not been placed before this House at an earlier date. Now, I was not surprised to hear what the Premier said with regard to the purchase of Native lands. I think the honorable member's (Mr. Hall's) theory is free-trade—free-trade in Native lands—and the honorable gentleman has placed it upon that ground, because he has said his impression is that there will be a dead loss on Native land transactions. What does he mean by that? Does he mean that we shall not realize in cash at the Treasury the amount that we expend in the purchase of Native lands? If that is what he means by "a dead loss," I am perfectly willing to agree with the honorable member; but that is not the sole reason for the acquisition of a landed estate in this Island. The gain which we hope to derive from the purchase of Native lands is not merely a Treasury gain, but a gain in actual *bond fide* settlement spread over this Island. Now, I think the honorable gentleman misrepresented the honorable member for Christchurch City when he told this House that that honorable member intended to adjust the finances by an Income-Tax Bill. The honorable member for Christchurch City said nothing of the kind. The honorable member meant, no doubt, that an Income-Tax Bill would be brought down; but that was not the whole scheme, I presume, of the late Government. They had a very much more extended scheme of finance to submit to the House; and, Sir, what is the position in which these gentlemen were placed by the vote of want of confidence? If the Financial Statement had been brought down towards the end of July, as it would have been, we should have had three months' more Customs revenue upon those items which the Government intended to deal with; and I believe I may state with some confidence that it was the purpose of the Government to increase the duties on some items of Customs; so that actually we have lost some three months' revenue by what I may call the unpatriotic conduct of those gentlemen. I think, so far from the honorable member for Christchurch City having created a mischievous impression over the country, the statement made to-night by the honorable member for Egmont, coloured as it is in the highest degree, is far more likely to create a mischievous impression, not only in this colony, but in the mother-country. The honorable member has

made a misstatement upon the assurance given to him by certain officers in the Treasury and Public Works Department; and I only say that the amount which the honorable gentleman estimates will have to be paid on public works before June next year is nearly double the amount which will be required. I think I can state, upon the assurance of the honorable member for Port Chalmers, that the total amount of payments upon public works—contracts entered into—will not exceed £100,000 a month. Now, if that is so, the honorable gentleman opposite has received from those gentlemen in the department a totally erroneous statement of the liabilities against the loan we are about to raise; but I would like to ask the honorable member for Egmont, has he never drawn against loan? What was the position of the colony before the three-and-a-half-million loan was raised? To meet contracts for public works, the late Government had to draw upon that loan before it was raised. That was a legacy entailed upon the Government which took office in 1877. I will say this, Sir: I believe it has been a common practice to anticipate the raising of loans, and to a certain extent to discount a loan before it has been raised. Now, the honorable member for Manawatu has stated that he is in favour of Treasury bills being issued; and the honorable member for Egmont says that he proposes to raise £200,000 by deficiency bills for two months, and that before the end of that time the whole thing would be reconsidered. It does not make much matter whether the money is raised on Treasury bills or deficiency bills, with this exception: that, if raised on Treasury bills, they could be made negotiable securities, and that less evil would result to the colony than would be the case if the money were raised here on deficiency bills. It is, however, a matter of very slight consequence. My own impression is, that the power contained in the Public Revenues Act of 1870, limiting the amount to £400,000, should be increased. Since that Act was passed the public works system has been extended, and the time has come for increasing that power which the Government should, in my opinion, have in its hands. Now, the honorable member for Egmont, with regard to the expenditure of last year, appears to me to have taken a most unfair view of the financial position of the colony. He does what he did on a previous occasion: he takes certain public departments, and he says that upon these departments there is a large increase of expenditure during the year; therefore the Government was extravagant. What are the departments which the honorable gentleman took? Two of the departments were Electric Telegraph and Post Office, and another was Public Domains and Buildings. I submit to the House that that is not a fair statement. Every honorable member knows full well that in the Electric Telegraph and Post Office Departments there are extensions made every year. New offices are built, new men appointed; and, of necessity, in consequence of the progress the colony is making, there must be a large addition made to the expenditure every year. Again, with regard to Public Domains and Buildings: we

know very well that the late Government had been pushing on public buildings in the colony; and I think honorable members will admit that in some parts of the colony the public buildings are in a very wretched and dilapidated condition; and in proportion to the zeal of the Government in this direction, so will the expenditure be regulated. Can any honorable gentleman call that extravagant? If the Treasurer had been fair, if he had been candid, he would have excluded the Post Office, the Telegraphs, and Public Domains and Buildings. He would have taken the purely administrative departments, and would have shown whether upon those departments there was a large excess of expenditure. But he does nothing of the kind, and I would venture to say that, if the purely administrative departments had been taken, he would have found that, so far from increases, there have been large reductions, and that the Government had effected retrenchment. Speaking for one department, I can say that when I left the Treasury the expenses were less than they were when I took charge eighteen months before; and I believe he will find that it was so with several other departments. The Treasurer has said that the £100,000 which it was proposed to transfer for revenue to the Public Works Department was not transferred. Well, that is so: but what was the position? We found that the amount of land revenue which was estimated was not likely to be realized, and, as a matter of fact, it was not realized by £350,000. What was the Government to do in a difficulty like that? The emergency was great. Would it have been justifiable on the part of the Government to deal with this money as they at first proposed to deal with it? I say it would not. The £100,000, which really was revenue, we still devoted to revenue purposes, and allowed that clause of the Appropriation Act to lapse which required it to be transferred to the Public Works Account. We did no more than what the honorable gentleman did before us. What became of his £148,000 of surplus with which he commenced the previous year? Was it not dealt with in precisely the same way? He brought it forward as revenue in the succeeding year. I was much amused at the view the honorable gentleman took, that the balance at the beginning of the year and the deficiency at the end of the year should be added together in order to show the whole deficiency of the year. I remarked that in 1877 some honorable member sitting on this side of the House said the same thing, when the present Treasurer replied, "Oh, you must not deal with it in that way; you must include the surplus of the previous year in the revenue, and compare it with the expenditure of the year." I say the argument he applied then is good now. I agreed with him in 1877, though I cannot agree with him to-night. So that we see the deficit for the past year was £131,000, but, if we take from that £50,000, which will be got from the land-tax, we have a net deficit of only £80,000; and, considering the extraordinary falling-off in the land revenue, which was due to circumstances over which we had no control whatever, the principal one being the failure of a bank in

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Glasgow, and consequent suspicion as to the soundness of credit not only of this but of other colonies—private credit, I mean, not public credit—if we take that circumstance into account, I think it will be admitted the financial results of the year are satisfactory, and that the honorable gentleman has not shown the contrary. We have virtually a deficit of only £80,000, and it cannot be said that this is not a satisfactory result, taking into account the extraordinary circumstances to which I have referred. The honorable gentleman has gone into the expenditure of the Native Department, and has pointed out that the expenditure in that department has increased during several years. I entirely concur with him when he says the expenditure of that department is more than it ought to be; but the circumstances were extraordinary. The £4,000 to which he referred as having been expended at the Kopua meeting, was an expenditure as justifiable as any expenditure ever was in the history of the colony, and the results in themselves are satisfactory. In securing an alliance with Rewi, one of the most powerful chiefs in the colony, and a man whose friendship for the colony will, in my opinion, save a large expenditure in the future, and insure peace and confidence in the Waikato, that expenditure should not be regretted by this House. On the West Coast the expenditure on Armed Constabulary showed an increase in consequence of the action of a fanatic, and that was a matter entirely beyond the control of the Government. I will just bring before the House the facts of the matter. This man, Te Whiti, has not been, as it were, the creation of the present day—it was not during the reign of the late Government that he assumed the position he has taken up. The fact is, that for six or seven years—all through the term of office of the previous Government—Te Whiti was increasing in power, and increasing in power for mischief, pursuing the same course that he has pursued during the last eighteen months; and I believe the time to have nipped his power in the bud was seven or eight years ago, when Te Whiti assumed possession at Parihaka. To these circumstances, entirely beyond the control of the Government, is due the fact that expenditure was increased, and the money anticipated from the sale of land on the Waimate Plains was not realized. Had that sale taken place, I believe that, notwithstanding the extraordinary commercial depression, the full amount of money anticipated from the land revenue would have been obtained. The honorable gentleman might have pointed out that all anticipations with regard to ordinary revenue during the last financial year were far more than realized. The fact is shown that the anticipations were exceedingly moderate, and the returns on all the important items of ordinary revenue have justified those anticipations.

Major ATKINSON.—I did.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Well, the honorable gentleman passed over it very lightly. I did not hear him dwell upon that fact, or even refer to it. I agree with him that there is a great difficulty which the House must look in the face, and it is quite right to place before the House in distinct terms

the position the House will have to take up. There is a deficit in the revenue, but not such a deficit as the honorable gentleman anticipates. My own impression is, that it is not right to make such statements as have been made as to the prospects. The deficiency, at the end of this year, if we leave out of account the deficiency at the beginning of the year, will not exceed £500,000 or £600,000. We have a right to say that the falling-off in the land revenue occurring in one year should not be dealt with in the way of imposing fresh taxation to the whole amount. I think that would be a mistake, and, if we did impose fresh taxation suddenly at this time of year, hoping to recover that amount, it would impose hardship upon the colony which the people are not prepared for. If the honorable gentleman brings down another Financial Statement, I hope he will go over these figures again, and he will find that he has greatly exaggerated on the one hand and under-estimated on the other, and that the position is not nearly so alarming and gloomy as he has made it out to be in his Statement.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honorable gentleman who has last spoken in defence of the late Government has every right to do so, for we may attribute a great many of the evils under which we are now suffering to him. At the time he made his Financial Statement, he will recollect that the estimate of land revenue which he put before the House was spoken of as altogether absurd. I went to him privately, and urged that he could never realize that amount of land revenue. Does any member of this House suppose that we could realize £1,230,000 for land revenue in this colony in any one year? Yet this is what that honorable gentleman estimated to get, knowing that the Minister for Public Works said we were to get another £750,000 from the land revenue—in all, £2,000,000 of money. Did any member of the House suppose that estimate could be realized? But how could such an estimate be reconciled with the profession of the Grey Government, that they were desirous of encouraging settlement? How could any honorable gentlemen stand up, and say they were hoping to receive a large amount of revenue from the land, and at the same time were desirous of settling the country? The money could only be raised in one way, by playing into the hands of the monopolists. Yet the Hon. the Premier, on his stumping tour, said he wanted to settle on these Waimate Plains a number of families, and that the Opposition prevented him. What Opposition has prevented him from settling these people on the land? Why, they wanted to sell the Waimate Plains for cash; and yet the Premier, in his stumping tour, tells the people that the Opposition prevented him from settling the people on the land. The Opposition could never have prevented him, because he had the administration of the lands in his own hands, and had not even to ask for permission to do what he says he wanted to do in this respect. The honorable member for Wanganui says that, had we got £360,000 from land revenue last year out of the Waimate Plains, the estimate would have been right. How was it possible that we could have got £360,000 in

cash out of those few thousand acres on the Waimate Plains? But, even so, that at once shows there was no intention to settle these lands, but to realize cash for them. The honorable gentleman has now come to the rescue of the late Government; but had he done his duty he would have been on those benches to bring forward a Financial Statement. Had he not believed to the late Premier in the character of the gentleman who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, we should have had a Financial Statement. But when the honorable gentleman took to writing articles in the newspapers, calling the Premier, of whose Government he was at the time a member, a coward, what could we expect?

Mr. BALLANCE.—Sir, I rise to a point of order, or, rather, to a personal explanation. I give the statement of the honorable gentleman an emphatic denial. There is not one word of truth in it. It is absolutely false.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is not parliamentary for the honorable member to characterize the statement made by the honorable gentleman as being absolutely false.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I submit to your ruling, Sir, and will withdraw the expression which you say is unparliamentary. I give the statement the strongest contradiction in my power. The language is entirely untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Such language as that cannot be used in this House.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I will say that there is no foundation for the statement made by the honorable gentleman.

Mr. McLEAN.—I was probably wrong in saying that he wrote the article. I give in so far as that. My information was, that he only dictated the article.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I assert that the honorable gentleman is making statements which have no foundation in fact; they are entirely opposed to fact.

Mr. SPEAKER.—After the denial given by the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance), the honorable gentleman, the member for Waikouaiti, should not repeat the statement made.

Mr. McLEAN.—I accept the denial. I will put the statement in a different way. It is well known that the honorable gentleman has considerable control over a newspaper which called the Hon. the late Premier a coward. I put it in that way.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think that has any bearing on the subject before the House.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honorable gentleman is not here, as Colonial Treasurer, to do what he ought to have done. He should not have left the Government on the eve of the meeting of Parliament; he ought to have been in his place in order to inform the House what the state of the finances of the colony was. That is the reason why I have thus referred to that honorable gentleman. Notwithstanding that he was turned out, I do not think the position he took up was at all to his credit. The honorable gentleman said that the Opposition never gave the Government the opportunity of showing the finance last year.

Did not the late Colonial Treasurer last session keep us waiting for a fortnight, telling us that he was going to give us a Financial Statement? Did he not keep us from day to day in expectation of this, and, to our surprise, did he not come down to the table of this House and mumble a few words and read a clause of the Appropriation Bill? Sir, that was all the Statement we got. He calls that a Financial Statement, and says he is not responsible for a Statement not having appeared in *Hansard*. It would be very hard for a Statement to appear in *Hansard* that was never delivered. They might as well have taken a piece out of the Appropriation Bill and put it in *Hansard*, and that would be the speech of the Hon. the late Colonial Treasurer at the last meeting of Parliament; and this was the complete Statement for which he was pleased to keep us waiting a fortnight—this was the complete statement of the finances of the colony. Now, the honorable gentleman (Mr. Ballance) confessed that the situation was a grave one, but he said it was not nearly so bad as my honorable friend the member for Egmont stated it to be. Honorable gentlemen can judge for themselves. They can take the estimated revenue for different years. They know the condition of the colony. Each member of this House knows the condition of the colony, and what prospect there is of a revenue coming in. Honorable members know that the state of the country at the present moment is such that we must expect a large deficiency in the revenue. Why, the last quarter shows a decrease in the Customs revenue. We all know that the state of trade in the country at present will prevent people from travelling on the railways, and will prevent the estimates from the railways being realized. People will economize, and there will be less Customs duties obtained. All these things have to be taken into consideration. The pressure for money is great, and so long as that pressure continues, so long will the revenue of the colony keep decreasing. The honorable gentleman says, "Are you to take into consideration the deficiency in the land revenue for one year, and increase the taxation to make up that deficiency?" Sir, when we talked of the land revenue falling off, that honorable gentleman persisted in telling the people of this colony that they were in such a flourishing condition that he could take the duties off the necessities of life. We on this side of the House told him he could do no such thing—that he must put on other duties—that he must increase taxation, so that we might not have a very large deficiency, such as now exists. He took no heed of what was said, but went on his way in defiance of any such consideration. He says, "We must keep faith with the country with regard to the duty on tea and sugar." They have broken every promise made to the country with the exception of that one, and it would be a very small sin to break that one. If they have committed such a great sin as breaking every other promise made to the country, surely it would not be so much worse to break the promise to take so much duty off tea and sugar. We take the deficiency at £600,000; and if he were to put on taxation to meet that de-

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fiency, would he not paralyze trade?—would he not throw this country into such a condition as I am sure few people would care to see it placed in? It is bad enough at present, but I do not know what state it would be in supposing he should increase taxation so as to meet this deficiency. We come now to the Native land question. The honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) stated that the land was a mercantile commodity. Ever since I have taken a seat in this House I have steadily opposed the purchase of Native land. I have done so in the Government and I have done so out of the Government, and I intend to follow that course. I say these purchases of Native lands are bringing this colony into great liabilities. The system of Native land purchases enables the Native Minister to sign vouchers on which is stated, Pay to the Hon. So-and-so, for a gratuity to this Native, £50—for a gratuity to that Native, £100. Who knows how much money is squandered in that way—whether it is put to a right purpose or whether it is not? We must put a stop to such a system. So long as you continue that system, so long will you have these abuses. The Native Minister has full control over these funds; he may pay what sums he pleases, and we know not where the money is going. I am sure that the Committee for the appointment of which the honorable member for Clive has given notice has been the means of inducing honorable members opposite to endeavour to stop the Statement made by the Colonial Treasurer. When they saw this afternoon that they could not stop it, the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) stood up and graciously said, "We are quite willing that the Colonial Treasurer should make that Statement to the country." That was said when they could not avoid it—when they could not help themselves. We do not know now who has taken up the position of leader. The honorable member for Port Chalmers takes up one position, and the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) takes up a different position, and we do not know who is leader of the Opposition.

Mr. MACANDREW.—It is very sad.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honorable member says, "It is very sad." The honorable member is in a very sad position. Then the honorable gentleman opposite (Mr. Ballance) referred to the power of Te Whiti as having been a growing power for several years. If such is the case, why did his Government, after they had been a short time in office, and after the Waitara meeting—why did they come down to this House and state that our relations with the Natives were satisfactory? I presume, when they stated that to the House, they stated what was the case; so that we must date the growth of Te Whiti's power from that time. I believe that the Native troubles have been caused by the fact that the Government simply did nothing in the way of administering Native affairs, but allowed everything to drift. I do not believe that you could have found half-a-dozen gentlemen in the House who could have brought the affairs of this colony to a more deplorable mess in such a short space of

time. The honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey)—the honorable member for the whole of New Zealand—for the human race—has, as usual, smoothed everything over; he would have us believe that the colony is in no difficult position whatever. Well, the honorable gentleman as Treasurer has done a great deal to precipitate the crisis in the colony. Instead of bringing this House together and devising means for raising money, he draws upon the local institutions. It was unfair to bring pressure on such institutions, during a monetary crisis such as has not been known for years. It was rather the duty of the Government to relieve the local institutions in a time of trouble, instead of pressing upon them at a time when the monetary institutions were in disrepute owing to the failures that had taken place in the Home-country. It is true that no loss has accrued to any of the local monetary institutions from such failures, and that there has been no cause for anxiety respecting them. The honorable gentleman, instead of calling this House together to devise means for raising money, took so much money out of those local institutions, and thus increased the financial crisis in the colony, and brought it to the state in which it is at present. That is one case of pure maladministration. Then the honorable gentleman went on to say that he was prevented by the dissolution from proposing means whereby to alleviate this crisis. I ask the honorable gentleman if finance was one of the questions included in "contested motions." He knows that it was not, and that he had full power and opportunity to come to this House and inform it of the state of the finances, and that he should have done so. When on the hustings, before the dissolution, I stated to my constituents what I estimated the deficiency would be. The honorable gentleman says it was only £60,000. Why, Sir, the difference between the actual and estimated revenue last year was £295,000. And how did the honorable gentleman make up his credit amount in 1877? He took items out of different loans and brought them into account as revenue. Then he said, "We will be magnanimous. We will hand over £100,000 to the Public Works Fund." The honorable gentleman had no right to that £100,000. He said he was going to hand it over to the Public Works Account, and he never did so; and now he takes it into revenue. I think he will need to take that amount and a great deal more into revenue. Then the honorable member for New Zealand—I do not know what place the honorable gentleman sits for, so I must regard him as representing New Zealand—said we prevented him from proposing taxes. He never told us there was a deficiency, and never proposed to bring forward any taxes; and I say that the honorable gentlemen on those benches will not have a very popular duty to perform when they bring down a taxation scheme to this House. Any one looking at the *Gazettes*, who understands them, could see what the deficiency was, and I myself was always able to take out the deficiencies and show them to my constituents. But how many members of this House study the *Gazettes*? How many members will even take

the trouble to analyze a Financial Statement made in this House? The task requires a deal of labour, and I do not suppose that it is undertaken by more than half-a-dozen members, who take an interest in the question of finance; and it is left to those half-dozen members to show to this House in what condition the finances are; and this they generally have to do at the end of the session, when it is difficult to get members to listen to them. The late Colonial Treasurer said it was no harm to anticipate the five-million loan by drawing against it to the extent of two millions. We know those honorable gentlemen have been in great straits for money; we know that they have had to raise money in London on short-dated debentures and in anticipation of this loan. I may tell the House that if half-a-dozen men in London cared to make the loan a failure they could do so. Why, it is not long since this colony put up one and a half millions for tender. And what was the amount tendered for? Only £200,000. And how is it possible to say that the same thing may not occur again, or that a crisis may not take place just as we are about to place the loan upon the market, and it may become a failure? I do not say that at such a crisis it would have been wise to reduce the expenditure on public works too heavily; but when the preceding Government had pulled the finances together, and had become very unpopular in consequence, the late Government came into power and launched out at a rate which no reasonable men, and no men having any regard for the interests of the country, would have done. And now another cautious Government has come into office; and, after performing the unpopular task of pulling the finances together, they will be turned out, while their successors are again to let the strings of the purse loose; and this is to go on till we get to the end of our borrowing, which, I am afraid, is not very far off. The late Government, until they got into office, talked loudly of economy; but after they got into power they did nothing but squander money, and increase the Civil Service—which they did to the extent that has been shown. This brings me to a point referred to by the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance), when he said that the Civil Service expenditure, as stated to the House, included the Post Office and Telegraph buildings. Why, the honorable gentleman knows that most of these buildings—the important ones, at any rate—were built out of loan, and that their cost was not included in the estimates of departmental expenditure. The honorable gentleman is perfectly aware of that, and yet he wished to mislead the House by saying the expenditure stated was not the actual expenditure. In increasing the Civil Service as they have done, the late Government have created a difficulty for their successors which those gentlemen will have some trouble in coping with. They have also done an injury to the Civil Service of this colony that it will take a long time to recover from. They have established a sort of terrorism in the Civil Service. They have taken away those valuable positions which have become vacant, and which are few and far between, and they have demoralized the Service by not allowing

their places to be filled by those who entered the Service as young men, and are working their way up to higher positions.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Name.

Mr. McLEAN.—There are several cases. There is Mr. Luckie's appointment. I am not going to say anything regarding these gentlemen themselves.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There is only one.

Mr. McLEAN.—I might also mention Mr. McCullagh Reed, who received a most lucrative appointment as a reward for concocting untruthful telegrams about the Native meetings of the late Government, and publishing reports which were so glaringly-coloured that those honorable gentlemen were ashamed to include them with the extracts from other newspapers which they embodied in the papers laid before the House, and which they called State papers. They were ashamed to take their own friend's telegrams, because they were so highly-coloured.

Mr. MACANDREW.—He is not in the Civil Service.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honorable gentleman says he is not in the Civil Service. When you appoint a gentleman at £600 a year to go Home and lecture in England—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Ireland.

Mr. McLEAN.—Well, Ireland. I suppose he was to help to send out the six thousand paupers whom the Government were going to flood this colony with—whom the late Premier, in his telegram of the 15th February last, sent for, so that they might be an addition to the immigrants whom the late Government were pouring into this colony in the dead of winter. They wanted to introduce six thousand paupers into New Zealand, in order that the colony might be flooded with a class of people who could not work, even if there were employment for them. And this is done by the great protector of the working-man. I wonder how the honorable gentleman can reconcile his conduct in this matter with his speeches to the working-men delivered in Wellington, Dunedin, and Christchurch! The honorable member misled this House by omitting from the papers on immigration which he laid on the table this celebrated telegram to which I have alluded, and the reply thereto. Why did he keep the House in ignorance of that telegram? And why did he go about the colony telling the working-men he was opposed to further immigration, while, almost at the same moment, he was endeavouring to flood the colony with six thousand paupers? To revert, Sir, to the subject of Mr. Reed, who, the honorable member for Port Chalmers said, was not in the Civil Service. The late Government appointed him as Immigration Agent at Home at a salary of £600 a year for two years, and allowed him £250 for travelling expenses each way. And this was done because he wrote coloured telegrams relative to the Native meetings, on the strength of which the late Government declared that peaceful relations had been at last established with the Native race. There are a multitude of other appointments in the Native Department especially. Sir, I am truly glad that we have seen the end of their misman-

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agement. I attach great importance to the motion of the honorable member for Clive—which the honorable gentlemen opposite are endeavouring to evade—for a Committee to inquire into the expenditure of the Native Department; and I believe that the result of this investigation, in conjunction with the disclosures as to the state of our finances, will be that the country will not back those honorable gentlemen up, and that they will never see those benches again.

Mr. MOSS.—I think, Sir, it will be admitted that it is a most inconvenient method of taking the Financial Statement that we are having recourse to to-night—discussing it bit by bit, sinking down to a mere investigation of figures as figures, and not in the slightest degree touching the policy which ought to form part of a Financial Statement, but which is absent altogether from the one now before us. I can assure the Treasurer and the Premier that they are both under a very great delusion in supposing that what has been said to-night, so far at all events as it relates to the accounts up to the 30th June last, has not been before the public, thoroughly understood by the public, and, I believe, thoroughly understood by not the least intelligent portion of the public—the honorable members who are sitting in this House. It has been published, not in *Gazettes*, but in the form of regular statements of receipts and expenditure, and has been commented upon by newspapers in all directions. We all knew that there was a deficiency; and I think the honorable members underrate the intelligence of those who conduct the newspapers of this colony, and the intelligence of honorable members also who have had before them all the data upon which the Statement now made—so far as the 30th June is concerned—is based. I have myself looked through them very carefully more than once, and I was quite prepared to hear that there was a deficit—in fact, I knew there was a deficit up to the 30th June, 1879. But, when the Colonial Treasurer told us that the deficit would be £912,000 at the end of this year, then I ventured to think, and I still think, that he is labouring under a very great delusion himself. It is utterly impossible, to my mind, that there can be such a deficit. The honorable gentleman must have been in a very gloomy frame of mind when he made the calculations upon which this Statement is based. He has been threatened with an attack of opposition, which has given him a very gloomy view of the future. Why, Sir, the ordinary revenue has not fallen off in any way for some time past. It is the land revenue which has fallen off. The ordinary revenue has increased; and why should he think it will decrease now?

Major ATKINSON.—We do not.

Mr. MOSS.—The honorable gentleman distinctly stated that we must expect the ordinary revenue to fall off during the year.

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Mr. MOSS.—I am happy to hear it. Then it must have been the honorable member for Wai-kouaiti who made the statement. Now, as a matter of fact, any one who has studied these matters must know that, even when countries are

in periods of financial distress, the public revenue does not necessarily fall off. That is the case in England at the present time. The most remarkable instance of the truth of this statement was the year 1847. It was noted at the time, and has been frequently quoted since, that, in the midst of the Irish famine, and when the greatest distress was being experienced in all the surrounding nations, England was able, for the first time, to do without deficiency bills. I do not think there is the slightest reason to apprehend any serious falling-off in the ordinary revenue in the approaching year. Then where is the deficit? Entirely in the land revenue; and I believe we shall continue to see a deficiency in that direction. But, admitting all these facts, it seemed to me that the Colonial Treasurer stopped just where we should have liked him to go on. How is the deficiency to be met? That is the point where the two sides of the House are more likely to be found at issue. That is exactly the point where the honorable gentleman's policy will come in. His Financial Statement, without that, is like "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out. I think we ought to have that information, because we shall otherwise go on debating a matter which could be settled by two or three ordinary accountants quite as readily as by the members of this House. Without that information we are simply beating the wind. We heard of the purchases of Native land, and reference was made to that as one direction in which much money had been wasted. That is not a secret discovered by the present Government. Nor does it affect the Government that last occupied those benches. We all know that, if money has been unprofitably spent in that way, it has been unprofitably spent by previous Governments. Notoriously so. We know of cases in which huge bushes have been leased one day to private individuals, and sold to the Government the next, subject to these leases of ninety-nine years. No revenue was likely to arise from such purchases as that. But will any one say that similar things have happened within the last two or three years? Whatever fault may be found with the late Government, it will be found that their land purchases are not unprofitable purchases: on the contrary, I think the colony may expect a considerable return from the land which those purchases represent. I was very glad to hear reference made to the meeting at Kopua, and to the cost of that meeting, because I venture to say that it was one of the cheapest operations, either from a military or civil point of view, which the colony has ever undertaken. If it had not been for the expenditure of that £4,000, we should have been compelled to maintain a large force on the Waikato frontier during the late excitement on the West Coast. I will not trouble the House at any length, because I feel that we have nothing to debate. It is no use going into petty matters of account; and there is no policy in the Financial Statement we have listened to to-night. There is nothing to lay hold of. It appears to me that the honorable gentleman has missed-fire. I cannot but regret the whole character of the Statement, if it was intended as a Financial Statement. The

air has been full of rumours of the fearful disclosures that were to be made, and of the fearful acts of corruption of the last Government. A mountain was raised before us, and at last it has produced this ridiculous mouse. The whole Statement can serve no useful purpose, except to draw a red-herring across the want-of-confidence motion. It seems to me that we are wasting time in discussing it.

Mr. READER WOOD.—I cannot lose this opportunity of congratulating the Colonial Treasurer upon being what I may call a very lucky—a very fortunate man. Sir, he has administered the finances of this country for many years. He has had large revenues at his disposal; he has had large loan funds at his disposal; he has managed the accounts just exactly as he pleased. He has always had a large majority at his back, although there have been a few members on this side of the House who declared that the course he was taking would lead to bankruptcy and ruin. He leaves those benches for a few months, other gentlemen take his place, and he is enabled to come down here to-night and say that all that has gone wrong in his own financing is the fault of the honorable gentlemen who have lately occupied those benches. That is precisely the position of affairs as they stand to-night. The honorable gentleman's plan was simply this: So long as figures were placed before the country which were, on the face of them, in the slightest degree plausible, and so long as money could be got, nobody ever troubled himself about the accounts, or cared whence the money came or where it went. The whole country was demoralized; everybody was crying out for expenditure; and the honorable gentleman, like the Roman emperors, fed the populace. The result is now tolerably plain. His system of finance was this: He had a variety of funds, and, when there was a deficiency in one, he compensated that deficiency by a balance from another, and so on; and, when it came to the last deficiency, he always pushed that on to what was considered to be a Fortunatus's purse—namely, the Land Fund. For a long time the Land Fund did act as the Fortunatus's purse. However largely honorable members estimated that Land Fund, somehow or other it always exceeded the estimate—it always supplied us with funds; but at last that Land Fund failed, and now we have this deficit of £600,000 or £700,000 sticking out, because there is no Land Fund upon which to put it. This is the simple solution of the financial difficulty we have got into. As long as the Land Fund lasted there was no chance of financial difficulty; but the moment it ceases financial difficulties crop up. And is it fair that all this should be laid on the backs of the honorable gentlemen who lately occupied those benches? I feel perfectly satisfied that the sense of fair-play and good feeling of this House and of the country will place the blame where it ought to lie—namely, upon that speculative finance that was begun by Sir Julius Vogel, and continued by the honorable gentleman who now denounces the finance of the late Government, which is simply a continuation of the finance of the former Government. Now, Sir,

one of the great charges made against the honorable member for the Thames and the late Government was this—the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer commenced his speech with it, and the Premier commenced his speech with almost precisely the same words: We were told that the finances had not been dealt with for the last fifteen months—that is to say, that the late Colonial Treasurer had made no Financial Statement. Now, I should like to know whose fault that was. It was the fault of the majority in this House in not demanding and compelling a Financial Statement to be made; and the majority in this House last session was on the other side. They had a majority of fourteen, and that majority of fourteen were unable to compel that honorable gentleman to make a Financial Statement. Why, Sir, there was an edifying scene enacted on the floor of this House last session. I was not here to see it unfortunately; but it must have been magnificently grand. Sir, it ought to become historical; and, if at any period of our career we have parliamentary buildings suitable to the requirements of this colony, and if we should have a New Zealand Maclise able to decorate our walls with historical pictures, this ought to be one of them. After the majority of fourteen had declared itself, what said the leader, Sir William Fox? He said to the honorable gentleman who had just been beaten, “We have a majority of fourteen, and we will impose conditions upon you, or we will grant neither your supplies nor your loan.” And what was the reply of the honorable gentleman who was then at the head of the Government? Did he come forward and say, “We are a weak and beaten party, just defeated by your majority of fourteen; we agree to whatever conditions you may choose to impose upon us”? No, Sir. He said, “I defy you and your majority. I will agree to no conditions, and you shall grant supply and the loan.” And what did the majority of fourteen say to that? Did they say, “We’ll give you no supply and no loan, until you agree to these conditions”? No. They slunk back to their benches and never said a word. And why? Because they dared not refuse the supplies; because they dared not refuse the loan. Because they knew it was their own system of finance which necessitated that loan, and necessitated those supplies. Does anybody in this House with a grain of common sense suppose for a single moment that, with that majority of fourteen, they would ever have allowed the member for the Thames a loan of £5,000,000 if it was not that they knew perfectly well that they could not refuse it, because the necessities of the country required it—the necessities imposed upon the country by their own legislation? “Conscience doth make cowards of us all;” and it made cowards of them, and they dared not carry out their threat. The honorable gentleman told us, and I quite agree with him, that the state of the finances requires the serious and immediate attention of the House. Sir, I say, if the House will give the finances its serious consideration, it is cheap at this £600,000—dirt-cheap, if the House will really take this matter under its control; if the House will put its foot down at

once and say there shall be no more extravagant expenditure; there shall be no more public demoralization; there shall be no more of this onerous taxation; there shall be no more expenditure on public works that have not been reproductive, and are not likely to be reproductive; there shall be no more votes bought with borrowed money. I say, if that is done, £600,000 will be cheap. It will be the cheapest article we have had yet out of the whole lot. The only thing I am afraid of is, that the House will not do anything of the sort. To enable it to do so, you want what we have not got, and what I do not see how we are going to get—a strong Government. You saw one Government put out a few days ago by a majority of two. You will see another put out in another day or two by a majority of about four or five; and what is to be the result after that is more than I or anybody else can say. But this I say: that, if we have—well, Sir, it is a word that fell on my ear, and I was astonished to hear it in this House; it was spoken by my honorable friend the member for Auckland City West (Mr. W. J. Hurst) when seconding the Address in reply to the Governor’s Speech—that word was “patriotism.” I do not think I ever heard it used in this House before. It came, however, from my honorable friend with a good ring; it was re-echoed also by my honorable friend the Premier, but it fell from his lips as if it were a word that had no meaning—as if it could not possibly be understood in this centre of self-seeking and intrigue. But, Sir, if there is any patriotism here—if we are really to be the representatives of the people—it is the bounden duty of this House to turn its attention to the question of finance; to settle the thing upon a sure and solid basis; to stop these scandalous and extravagant votes for public works, in which nobody believes and which everybody asks for. If we do that, we shall, for the first time for the last eight or nine years, be really the representatives of the people, and be doing something for the country. The honorable member for Waikouaiti has made a charge against the late Government which I certainly should not have thought would have come from him. He made a charge with reference to the demoralization of the Civil Service by the action of the late Government; and when asked to mention names, all he could mention were two persons who, during a period of two years, have, it appears, been, in a somewhat irregular way, launched into the Civil Service. Sir, the honorable gentleman was himself a member of the Government of which Sir Julius Vogel was the head. In 1869, in 1870, in 1871, and in 1872 the gentleman who was at the head of that Government used to import by shoals into the Civil Service members from this House. And so atrocious, so abominable was it, and such a public scandal did it become, that the House, in its own defence, had to pass a measure which absolutely prevented members of the House from holding any Civil office for twelve months after they had ceased to be members. And not only was that done, but afterwards there was a system of corruption established within the

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walls of the House itself among its members that rendered it necessary to pass a Bill of Indemnity, whitewashing every one who had done anything in that way. In vain the honorable member for the Thames begged, and prayed, and pleaded. He said, "If these offences have been committed, I am perfectly willing to grant a Bill of Indemnity; but let us have the names put in the Bill. Do not make it general. We have not all done these things. Surely there are some of us who have not done these things." But no. They would not have the names mentioned. There was to be a general Bill of Indemnity: and by the force of a majority it was passed. And yet, Sir, that honorable gentleman has the assurance to get up and tell us the late Government ought to be condemned—utterly condemned—because two persons in two years have been wrongly imported into the Civil Service. I do not excuse the late Government. They have no doubt "done a great many things that they ought not to have done, and left undone a great many things that they ought to have done;" but I do not think the honorable gentleman is the one to accuse them. On the contrary, I should have expected to have found the best supporters of the late Government amongst those who now oppose them, because they followed in their tracks very closely. They have been nearly as extravagant as those honorable gentlemen, and have done nearly everything that the honorable gentlemen did who succeeded in turning them out in consequence. I should have thought that, instead of turning round on the late Government and accusing them of these things, they might have said to them, "Try. Go on. If not equal to us, you are getting along very well. We will be your best supporters, and no doubt in time you will come to us." That is the course which, when I came down here, I thought that side would take, and that I should find myself once more forced to take up that almost solitary position which I have before been compelled to occupy in this House. But what do I find? I find that I am obliged to support the late Government, as being the lesser evil of the two.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I must say I was surprised at the way in which the Statement made by the Colonial Treasurer was received to-night, and I quite agree with those who have pronounced the debate that has taken place as a somewhat unprofitable one. But, Sir, I do not consider that the Colonial Treasurer is in any way accountable for the tone which the debate has taken, nor do I think he can in any way be blamed for having merely brought before us to-night the state of the public finances, without taking that further step which was referred to by the honorable member for Farnell, and developing a policy by which the deficiency in the revenue was to be met. I do not suppose that any member of the House on either side expected for a moment that my honorable friend would bring down to-night any policy for the future, or do anything more than keep the promise he made on a previous occasion and lay before the House a clear outline of the exact position of our finances to-day. Running through

the speeches that have been made on the other side of the House to-night, I find that the late Premier was entirely at odds with another honorable member—a prominent member—of his party as to the character of the Statement of the Colonial Treasurer. The late Premier said very little more than to corroborate what my honorable friend had stated in the House. He did not in any way deny the accuracy of his figures, or the general correctness of his remarks. All he told us was, that there was nothing new in what the Treasurer had brought down—that everything that honorable gentleman had stated had been known for months; that it had been placed plainly before the country every quarter in the quarterly public accounts; that it was only such a Statement as he himself would have brought down earlier than this if he had remained in office, and for the result of which the Government of which he was the head were prepared to provide. He said he actually left measures for the new Government which would provide for the whole condition of affairs set forth in the Statement of the Treasurer. All of new that he told us was that the party who placed the Government in power were to blame for the fact that this condition of affairs was not provided for before, and was not placed before the House in the usual way. The same thing has been said by other honorable members; but every one who was in the House last session knows that the honorable member, the late Premier, had the fullest opportunity to lay the state of the finances before the House. We adjourned from day to day for nearly a fortnight at his own request, in order that he might have an opportunity of elaborating the figures which would enable him to make his Statement; and we waited with the greatest anxiety for such a disclosure as the present Treasurer has given us to-night. No obstacle whatever was thrown in the way of the honorable member for the Thames: on the contrary, the Opposition afforded him every possible opportunity for making his Financial Statement, and displayed a moderation on account of which they have incurred the stigma of feebleness and irresolution. The fact is, the irresolution and weakness with which we are now charged consisted solely in the extreme moderation we displayed for the express purpose of allowing the honorable gentleman to bring down his Financial Statement last session. There is nothing in what I now state that can be contradicted. I myself desired above all things that we should have a Financial Statement; and, when the Loan Bill was before the House, I said in my place that nothing but the promise of the Premier that we should have a clear and explicit statement of the accounts before Parliament was dissolved would induce me to support the passing of that Loan Bill. I was prepared to face unpopularity and every sort of objection rather than allow the Loan Bill to pass, if not very certain that we should have a clear and explicit Financial Statement. But, after all this, the honorable gentleman comes down and tells us that we, and we alone, prevented the state of the finances being laid before the country. What we held, and what we pressed upon him, was this:

that he ought to have called Parliament together not later than the month of May, and should then have laid before the country the serious and alarming state of the finances. So far from preventing the honorable gentleman from making a Financial Statement, we urged and pressed him in every way, until he came down to the House and told us our conduct was cruel, that we were urging him beyond his powers, and that he could not possibly make a Statement. The honest truth of the matter was, that the honorable gentleman had no grasp of the financial position of the colony, and did not know how the finances stood. He took control of the Treasury only a few weeks before the session opened, and he knew no more about the finances of the colony than any child in the country does. Nothing could be clearer than that, when the honorable gentleman, as Colonial Treasurer, first sat at the table to pass the estimates. When the simplest question was put to him asking for information regarding the state of the finances we could get no answer, for the simple reason that he was in such a puzzle that he could not give a rational or intelligible answer. I well remember the present Colonial Treasurer asking him whether a sum of over £40,000 was at debit or credit, and the Treasurer of that time could not tell to which side the balance belonged. He absolutely knew nothing about it; and that was the real reason why no Financial Statement was made. The state of affairs disclosed to-night convinces me more than ever that the Government acted very wrongly indeed in allowing so great a part of the year to slip away, and not calling Parliament together before the 24th of July. Had they done their duty to the country honestly and straightforwardly they would have called us together at least in May, and would have said, "The state of the finances is so grave that we must make provision at once for additional taxation, or else largely reduce the public expenditure." The honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) told us that the reason why he did not reduce the expenditure was because it was very impolitic to reduce the public expenditure during a time of depression, and I was surprised to find that that statement was loudly cheered by honorable gentlemen on his side of the House. I admit at once that it is unpopular to reduce public expenditure during a period of depression; but to say that it is impolitic to do so is to state what to my mind is exactly the reverse of fact. I say that it is the bounden duty of men intrusted with the control of the affairs of a colony like this to reduce public expenditure, whether it is a time of depression or not, when they see that it is greater than the colony can bear, and is leading the colony into a state of affairs which will enormously increase that depression, and will enormously increase the burden of poverty weighing on the people, however much it may damage their popularity for the time being. I understand at once that, if you suddenly stop public works during depression, it will have the bad effect on the country which all spasmodic action has. I am not at all advocating spasmodic action; but I say that public expenditure ought to have been reduced, and the House ought to have been invited

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to reduce it. It is not necessary expenditure on public works that we object to. It is that during all this time, when the Government knew, or ought to have known, that the expenditure was largely exceeding the revenue—when they ought to have been cognizant that we should meet this year with a very large deficiency—it was their bounden duty to cut down the expenditure in those departments which are not in any way remunerative or profitable. Let us take, for instance, the Native Department. How can we—how can the Middle Island members especially—justify the enormous expenditure on Native affairs during all this time when the Government knew there was a deficiency, and that every day the deficiency was increasing without any means whatever being in view to meet it? When we find that the expenditure on Native affairs has actually exceeded the votes—which were admitted to be enormously extravagant—by £18,000; when we know that the money has been squandered in all directions, not on productive works, or to relieve the depression, but in a manner which was absolutely a terrible waste to the country; when we know that the money has been squandered in presents to the Natives, a great part of which is consumed in drink, and which, instead of relieving the depression, actually increased it, we know that that money might have been saved, and would have gone to decrease the deficit we find in the Public Treasury to-day. I entirely dissent from the opinion of the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) that it is impolitic to reduce public expenditure during a time of depression. He simply used the wrong word. If he had spoken what was in his mind I am sure he would have said it was unpopular to do so; and the reason why the Government did not reduce the public expenditure was simply because they were afraid to face the unpopularity which reduction in expenditure always produces. Whether this Government is in office or another Government, I say they will have to face that unpopularity; but, if they do their work honestly and boldly, their unpopularity will be transient, and they will gain the respect and confidence of the country for having done this unpopular but by no means impolitic act. Then the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) told us that he was prevented from dealing with finance by the manner in which the dissolution was granted by His Excellency in August last. Now, it is true that the Governor did attach conditions to the granting of a dissolution, those conditions being that, besides the Loan Bill and the finance—which he specially excepted in his communication to this House—there should be no contested motions brought forward. The honorable gentleman tells us that this prevented him from dealing with finance. We have only to look in *Hansard* to see that in the communicated conditions imposed by His Excellency he has expressly stated that finance and the Loan Bill were excepted from the conditions. Those were the two things he might deal with; and the Governor instructed us to deal with them before dissolving; and yet the honorable gentleman tells us

that he was prevented from dealing with finance by the conditions imposed by the Governor. Even supposing the conditions imposed by His Excellency had precluded him from dealing with finance, is it not clear to the mind of every honorable member that the Premier at that time had a way out of the difficulty? If he really believes that the Governor prevented him from dealing with finance, and if he was desirous of avoiding a great public danger, all he had to do was to resign. In fact, there is no doubt whatever in my mind that the terms in which the Governor's memorandum were couched consisted of a clear intimation to him that, if in his opinion the public danger was so great as might be conceived, then he ought to resign, and ought not to accept a dissolution. The Governor laid the whole responsibility upon him. The Governor actually said in his memorandum that he recognized there was a great public danger in a dissolution taking place at that time, but he understood that Ministers would accept the whole responsibility for it. Yet, after that, the honorable gentleman comes down and says we on this side of the House are to blame for the present state of affairs. The honorable gentleman has adduced the strongest reason why there should not have been a dissolution; and that reason was urged upon him at the time, inside this House, and by the public Press from one end of the colony to the other, as a reason almost insuperable why at that particular juncture Parliament should not be dissolved. If he had really cared one straw about the interests of this colony he would have resigned his office at that moment, and would have left it to another Government to deal with the question of finance. Instead of that, in the teeth of the warning of the Governor and of members of this House, he dissolved Parliament without laying before the country one word of explanation as to the position of the finances. I said that the honorable member entirely corroborated everything said by the Colonial Treasurer. He told the House that he knew it all, that a great number of members knew it from the quarterly accounts published in the *Gazette*, and that there was nothing new at all in this Statement, and nothing that the late Government would not have provided for. But no sooner was that said—no sooner had we got that testimony from the late Premier—than the late Colonial Treasurer, the honorable member for Wanganui, comes and tells us that there is nothing in the Statement, that the figures are grossly over-coloured, and that, instead of the state of affairs being gloomy, as admitted by the honorable member for the Thames, they are, in fact, rather satisfactory than otherwise. What he stated was that the whole position of the finances was very satisfactory. There we have those conflicting views of the matter from two gentlemen who were within three months members of the same Ministry—one Premier and the other Colonial Treasurer, and one having succeeded the other in the Treasurership. What weight can be attached to the statements of the honorable member for Wanganui when he contradicts the statement of his successor in office, and tells us that the Statement of the present

Colonial Treasurer, corroborated by the late Colonial Treasurer, has nothing in it, and is a gross misrepresentation of the actual facts? I am quite contented with the figures brought down by the present Colonial Treasurer. As to his past policy of finance I have nothing to say. I have differed very widely from him on broad principles of finance, and, unless he gives us a totally different finance from that brought down in 1877, I shall differ from him as widely still. But, as to his figures, I say that he has never brought figures down to this House that could be impugned. I believe that for accuracy of accounts he is not to be surpassed by any honorable gentleman in this House. And yet the honorable member for Wanganui gets up, without a word of argument, or without the slightest proof, and says that the honorable member for Egmont has grossly coloured the Statement which he has made. I believe that the Statement brought down by the honorable member for Egmont is a sober, accurate, and true statement of the finances of the colony at this moment, and I do not attach the slightest importance to the mere assertion made by the honorable member for Wanganui, that the honorable member for Egmont has very grossly coloured the figures for the purpose of effect. He is the last man in the world to colour figures, and I entirely believe him when he says that had it been in his power he would have brought down a Statement more encouraging to honorable gentlemen and to the country. The honorable member for Wanganui tried to divert the mind of the House from that part of the Statement which refers to the vast expenditure of public money, and the liabilities connected with the purchase of Native land. He told us that there would certainly be a loss on Native lands—a mere pecuniary loss; but that what they had to look forward to was not direct money profit, but the great question of the settlement of the North Island; and that statement was cheered rapturously by honorable members on that side of the House. His predecessor, the honorable member for the Thames, stated distinctly that there would be a large profit—a large money profit. His predecessor dropped sentiment for the moment, and applied himself to the strict monetary business. He told us there would be a money profit on these Native land transactions, and that the Colonial Treasurer was mistaken when he supposed that these millions of money spent in Native lands would not prove remunerative. The honorable member for Wanganui says that there will be a loss, but that there will be an immense gain in the settlement of the country, and that we must not regard a mere monetary loss, because indirectly it would be a great gain. I believe there will be a great loss, because I believe that we pay for these Native lands a great deal more than we shall get for them in the open market. Not only is the price paid in many cases very ill-considered and ill-estimated, but the matter is not treated as a private land transaction would be, where a man would look at a piece of land and consider well what he had to pay before he bought it. The eagerness shown in these land-purchase transactions has led to many ill-advised

things. Look also to the expenses of the Land Purchase Department. They are enormous. Here is a department which, two years ago, the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) told us he was going to do away with absolutely. Last year, £10,000 was expended for salaries in the Land Purchase Department, so that it will be seen on the whole that we are paying a very high price for these lands—a much higher price than we are likely to get back for many years to come. But, admitting that the loss on these lands was not considerable—admitting that we ought not to look for a pecuniary gain upon them—is the statement correct, that the operations of the Land Purchase Department have led to the settlement of the North Island? Where, I ask, is the evidence that people have been settled on the purchased land? The cry in the North is, that there is no such land to be had for the purposes of settlement; and I say that the whole thing has been breaking down as a pecuniary transaction, and as a system of settlement of people upon the land. Then the honorable member for Wanganui tells us that the measures referred to by the Colonial Treasurer as having been found, belonging to the late Government, for providing for this deficiency, were not all their measures—that they intended to increase the Customs duties. There he comes in conflict with the late Colonial Treasurer, who tells us that the deficiency was entirely provided for. The honorable gentleman says, "Oh! you have not got all the measures. We had got a beautiful policy to develop, entirely apart from the measure you have got hold of." Then the honorable gentleman tells us that one of the measures proposed was for increasing the Customs duties. Let us look back to what the honorable gentleman did in 1878, when his policy was to abolish the Customs duties, and place the whole taxation on land, property, companies, &c. And there was that unfortunate Beer Duty Bill. What the honorable member for Wanganui did by way of a slight beginning was to throw away £100,000 a year Customs revenue—an amount which was easily collected on articles of general consumption; and then he comes down and tells us that his policy was to increase the Customs duties. He throws away £100,000 one year, and puts it on another year in consequence of a deficiency in the revenue. That is his system of financing. One of the great causes of the deficiency which has taken place is the "tinkering" with the finances by that honorable gentleman in 1878. Anything better calculated to bring about a deficiency and financial ruin could not be conceived than the finance of the honorable member for Wanganui. I criticised it at the time as a peddling policy; and the thing has turned out to be exactly as I represented it. The honorable member depended on the Land Fund for a great share of the revenue that was to be spent on ordinary purposes, while the Minister for Public Works (Mr. Macandrew) also looked to the same source for his public works expenditure. Who can forget the remarks I had the honor to make on that occasion, when I compared these two politicians to two bears climbing up the same pole,

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and trying to sit on the same spot on the top? I told them that the pole would break down, and I was laughed at by those honorable gentlemen. We were told that we were Jeremiahs, looking gloomily upon everything. What is the result? It has absolutely broken down. In the month of October, when the land revenue was just then beginning to show signs of slightly dropping off, the honorable gentleman came down and made his estimate of land revenue for the year. We told him it was fallacious, and that within one month from that date he would have no land revenue to depend on. What did he say? "Look at the October sales; they are keeping it up: if so, we shall have half a million in Canterbury alone." The October sales were simply owing to the Bill providing for pre-emptive rights being declared by Land Boards to be of special value, and the large amount paid in was caused by the runholders buying up the pre-emptive rights at £2 an acre, to escape the legislation with which they were threatened. I warned the honorable member for Wanganui that after October he need not look for any more land revenue. He laughed at the whole thing, and told us that we were totally incorrect, that we were going on wrong premisses, that we were drawing wrong conclusions, and that, in fact, we knew nothing about it. The revenue went down at once from hundreds of thousands to £24,000, and has never since shown any signs of revival, until within the last few weeks in Canterbury. This all shows that the honorable member brought it in a great measure on himself by his utter incompetency to deal with the finance of the country during the short time he occupied the position of Treasurer. The honorable member went on to tell us that the expenditure at the great Native meetings in the North was a good expenditure—that it was money well spent, and that, judged by the results, the meetings were cheap, even at the high price which we find they cost. That, again, is a pure assertion, which amounts to nothing more, and I do not believe it in the least. He tells us that the alliance of Rewi, which he says was gained at the Te Kopua meeting, was well worth the four or five thousand pounds spent at the meeting. How can it be shown that the alliance was worth a sixpence to us? He tells us that it has enabled the Government to dispense with a large armed force on the frontiers of Waikato. Why was it necessary to keep a large armed force on the frontier of Waikato if, as we were informed more than a year ago, peace was "at last" restored? Supposing that under ordinary circumstances it is necessary to keep a large armed force at Waikato—though I cannot see the necessity of it; I see no signs of disturbance there—the next question is, Has the alliance of Rewi removed the cause which would otherwise necessitate the presence of a large armed force at Waikato? It would not make one straw of difference whether Rewi is our friend or not. I question very much whether we have Rewi's alliance. I believe that, for his own purposes, and for the benefit of his own people, he entered into communication with the Government; but I am quite satisfied that this communication came to nothing, and if any

one derived benefit it was Rewi and his people, and they alone. Are we to suppose that it need have cost four or five thousand pounds to hold that Kopua meeting? The money was squandered. There was no control over it, or attempt at economy. The money was thrown away in some channel, and we cannot find where it all went to. All we know is, that there was £2,200 spent for gifts and presents to Natives, and food, which, I presume, includes an immense quantity of rum. According to the honorable member for Parnell the meeting was a tea-meeting.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Champagne.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—They were above rum, and had nothing but champagne. The money was squandered; and all the good effects, if any, might have been obtained without any of this vast expenditure at all. It was not necessary to squander so much money in food, and drink, and presents, in order to arrive at precisely the same result as regards friendly relations between the two races. It is the waste that we object to. We object to seeing taxes placed upon the Middle Island which are exceedingly costly of collection and harassing in their incidence, and then to have the money wrung from people who can ill afford to spare it squandered upon these Native meetings, and made to serve no practical purpose and achieve no result whatever, so far as the settlement of Native difficulties is concerned. The honorable member for Wanganui went on to say that he had estimated almost precisely the amount of revenue that would be obtained; and this is how he makes that out: He over-estimated the land revenue by one and a half millions, and under-estimated the receipts to be derived from the railways—the excess on one goes to make up the deficiency on the other; and that is what he calls good finance. So long as there is a good average at the end of the year it does not matter; the one makes amends for the other. I must say, however, that that is fancy finance, and that all calculations in such finance must be upset by a crisis like that we had lately. As for the great profit on the railways, I myself am beginning to doubt very much as to whether there are such very large profits at all. I firmly believe that if the railway accounts were fairly charged, as between capital and profits, we should not see anything like large profits from the railways. For example, how is the reconstruction of railway lines paid for—the renewal of lines, the placing down of heavy steel rails for the bad rails placed on the line in the first instance? This is paid for out of borrowed money—out of loan. Surely no man conducting his own private affairs would charge that to capital instead of to profit; but it is charged by the Government to loan, and it is not accounted for in the profit or expenses of the railway. If we were to keep these accounts as an ordinary private person keeps his accounts, no great increase in railway revenue would be shown. And thus the correctness upon which the honorable gentleman plumes himself would vanish into thin air. Certainly the honorable member for Wanganui has an extraordinary idea of the finances of the colony. He tells us that there is only a deficiency of £260,000, whereas

last year there was a surplus of £120,000; and yet he considers that upon the whole the finances are eminently satisfactory. That may be his idea of what is satisfactory, but it seems to me most unsatisfactory, and that no member of this House who has the slightest regard for the public interest can regard it as otherwise than an exceedingly serious matter. The honorable gentleman always harps on the point of the land revenue having fallen to a considerable extent. Well, Sir, every one who pretends to take part in the affairs of this House ought to have known that the land revenue would not keep up. It has been wrong to depend for purposes of ordinary expenditure upon the land revenue, no matter what Government may have been in office; and I say, further, that we shall never get honest finance, permanent finance, or satisfactory finance until we entirely cease to depend upon land revenue for the purposes of ordinary expenditure. That ought to be the first thing we should do—to so order our finance that for the ordinary expenses of government we should depend absolutely upon ordinary sources of revenue. You have no right whatever to touch the land revenue for such a purpose. The land of the colony is the security for the money which we have borrowed, and the land revenue belongs to the public creditor, and should not be applied to other purposes than the repayment of the loans, or the construction of other public works which may form additional security to the outside creditor. Yet the honorable member for Wanganui comes here and says that, by the mere accident of the postponement of a land sale, we lose revenue to the amount of half a million. I hope we shall hear no more of that. I hope that, when my honorable friend the honorable member for Egmont, or any other Treasurer, comes down with his financial policy for the year, he will put out of consideration, as regards the expenditure for ordinary purposes, all reliance upon the land revenue of the colony. But the honorable member for Wanganui entirely ignores the fact that, if the land revenue has fallen off, it is because of misgovernment, and that he and his late colleagues are alone to blame for it. What did they do immediately they had estimated they were to get two millions as a Land Fund? It was well known that by far the greater proportion of that sum must come from Canterbury; yet one of the first acts they did was to reserve eight hundred thousand acres of the best land in that province. How they could expect to get two millions sterling at all, I never could make out; but, supposing they had any chance of getting that sum, they went to work in the manner best calculated to make the thing absolutely impossible. The first act they did was to put a tax of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound upon the purchasers, and the next act was to reserve eight hundred thousand acres of the only land in Canterbury that would sell. Even if times had been ever so good and money ever so plentiful, they would not, after this action, have been able to realize their estimate of land revenue, because there would have been no land to be bought. Any one who has lived in Canterbury, and knows where the land is situated, must know

that the land reserved was the only land that the people would have purchased, even if they had the money. But, apart from this, speculation in land could not be expected when a land-tax of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound had just been imposed, and when Ministers went about the country threatening to put on a tax of 3d., 4d., or 6d. in the pound. In such a state of things a man would be mad to buy unimproved land—it would be simply a millstone around his neck to drag him down; and therefore we see that from that time to the present there have been no land sales in Canterbury, except in the case of one or two men who had the courage to go into the back-country. That is the effect of the financing of the honorable member for Wanganui. Last year, when he came down with the finances, I was perfectly astonished that any man could be so ignorant as to the state of the country, and so ignorant as to the circumstances in which people were placed in various parts of the colony; but I am now more convinced than ever that he knows nothing of the practical operation of the finances of the colony, or the circumstances with which he has to deal. He looks at everything from a purely book-keeping point of view, and is not at all aware of how the operations of his finance will affect the colony. Before I leave the honorable gentleman I should like to say one word about a matter which affects no other person but himself. He has been taxing my honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer, and persons acting with him on this side of the House, with preventing the late Government from bringing down a Financial Statement to this House. Sir, they had every opportunity for doing so. If they pleased, they could have called the House together for the express purpose of laying before us a Financial Statement. But nothing of the kind was done. The honorable gentleman himself seems to have taken fright; for, two or three weeks before the House met, he suddenly left the Ministry. Just when the House was going to meet, and when the country was looking forward to an exposition of its finances, that honorable gentleman quitted the Ministry. Under what circumstances we do not know. The honorable member for Waikouaiti has given one version, and for me that is quite sufficient. I am not going to inquire how or why he left the Ministry. Certain statements were made public, and I may say it was with the utmost regret that I observed that such a scene as took place was ever published, to the great scandal of the colony. But whatever took place is not to the point. What I complain of is, that when that honorable gentleman came down to this House he did not on the first possible occasion explain to the House how it was that he had resigned the portfolio of Colonial Treasurer at such a critical period, and how it was he was unable any longer to perform the duty of bringing the finances of the country before the House. That was the most singular circumstance I have ever met with in my connection with public men and public affairs. The honorable gentleman sat in the House for weeks, and never once opened his mouth to explain how it was he had ceased to

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be Colonial Treasurer. He is now practically debarred from coming down here and lecturing us about finance, and denouncing my honorable friend for the action he has taken, by the fact that he has never yet explained to the House how it was he evaded the responsibility of making a Financial Statement last session. We have never received any explanation. I believe that throughout last session he never once addressed the House. There he sat, observing that the Colonial Treasurer floundered with the finance in this House. He seemed to be desirous that that honorable gentleman should exhibit most perfectly his utter ignorance of the public business of the colony. He never once got up and explained what took place between himself and the Premier that caused his retirement from the Ministry, and never attempted to give any information at all as to the state of public affairs. And therefore I say that he has not the slightest claim on the consideration of this House—that he has no right whatever to come down here and lecture us upon the position of the finances, or to lecture the occupants of the Treasury benches for what they have done towards bringing the state of affairs before the House and the country. I think my honorable friend the present Treasurer has done a very great deal of good to the colony by bringing down this plain, unvarnished statement of our finances. I believe, when the state of affairs is really known, it will create a great feeling throughout the country. I am satisfied that people generally have no idea whatever of what is the position of our finances. The truth is, that the colony has come to the end of its financial tether. We have been coming to it for some time past, and at last it has been reached. There is no doubt about it. And that the Statement made by the Colonial Treasurer is true there cannot be the slightest doubt, for he has said that the figures are all ready, and that he will lay tables before us to verify the statements he has made. Every thinking man will at once recognize that the colony is in a dangerous position, and every man who has anything to lose will at once feel that his attention is demanded by the condition of public affairs. I am satisfied that the honorable gentleman has done perfectly right in bringing down this Statement at the earliest possible moment, and I believe very great good will arise from it. I was rather amused at the manner in which the honorable member for Waitemata came down to the House, with that majestic impudence which is characteristic of him, and informed us that he had no confidence in anybody or anything else, except the honorable member for Waitemata. He said he supported the late Government because he thought they were the lesser evil of the two; but, generally speaking, he saw nothing in them to call for his very earnest support; that the country was going to the dogs as fast as it could, and, in fact, that it had been on that road ever since Sir Julius Vogel brought down his public works policy. In fact, the honorable member for Waitemata seemed to contemplate the position with great equanimity. He seemed to feel in a very satisfactory and comfortable state, and to think it would be all the

better as soon as the colony was smashed up. Well, I cannot say any one envies him that position. I suppose we must put it down to the fact that there has been an utter absence of responsibility from his shoulders. He has been taking part in public affairs for years and years, and, after all, he finds that the only position he can take is, that he is able to criticise and find fault without being able to offer one suggestion likely to be of advantage to the country. Sir, I quite agree with the honorable gentleman that the state of affairs in which we find ourselves placed to-day is the result of the public works policy of 1870. I myself, in the House and out of the House, have never for a moment wavered from my opinion, and have never hesitated to express my opinion, that the policy introduced by Sir Julius Vogel in 1870 would sooner or later land the colony in a very grave and disastrous financial difficulty. I have never wavered in that belief. I have been opposed to that policy and to the mode of carrying it out. When I heard honorable gentlemen crowing over the success of the colony, and the enormous good which that policy had done to the country, I felt that the time would come—that all we had to do was to wait, and one of these days the Colonial Treasurer would have to come down to the House and say that the public works policy was at an end for the time being; that the bubble had burst; that there was a deficiency of a million sterling, which must be made up by the imposition of increased taxation. I entirely agree with my honorable friend that such must inevitably be the result of such a policy, administered in such a fashion as that policy was administered. I do not mean for a moment to cast any aspersions on the honorable gentleman who brought down that policy: Sir Julius Vogel is not here to answer for himself; I do not wish to blame him for bringing down that policy. I do think there was the germ of permanence in it, or the elements of great success; but I say the policy was ruined from the outset by the reckless extravagance by which it was administered, and by the manner in which it was pulled to pieces by all sections of this House. There were provincial jealousies, and all sorts of jealousies, which interfered greatly with that policy; and, instead of being a well-devised scheme, spread over ten years and carried out in a methodical manner, the whole thing was hurried on in two, or three, or four years, and absolutely destroyed. I have always been of opinion that the Vogel Government would have done far better to have put their foot down firmly in the first instance and said, "We will not allow this great policy to degenerate into a mere scramble; we will resign our seats a hundred times over rather than allow that to be done." They would have retained office, and would have been able to carry out the policy in a prudent manner. They would have turned it into a success, instead of its being to-day an entire failure. But it was not in Sir Julius Vogel's line to do that. He was more an originator than an administrator. When he had once got a scheme placed before the House it mattered little to him how it was to work. He was warned by honorable members in

this House, and by people outside of it, that within a very short time it must come to this: that the expenditure of the colony would increase beyond the revenue; that, the burdens of the colony having increased altogether out of proportion to the increase of population, an enormous deficiency would have to be faced; and that a crushing burden of taxation would have to be placed upon the shoulders of the people. I agreed with the honorable member for Waitemata that such a state of things would come about; but where I differ from the honorable gentleman is this: He entirely skips over that period in the history of the colony which he has spent in improving his mind amongst the older countries of civilization. From the time when the honorable gentleman shipped from Auckland, on his voyage Home, until he took his seat again in the House, he seems to imagine that there has been an entire blank in the history of the colony. There has been nothing of the kind. I have been in the colony during that interval of time when the honorable gentleman was enjoying himself amongst the relics of antiquity. During that interval of time events took place which take the blame off the shoulders of Sir Julius Vogel's Ministry, and put it upon the shoulders of the Ministry who have just been turned out of office. We were told by the honorable member for Wanganui that when he was Colonial Treasurer he could not foresee what was coming. But others could foresee what was coming. Men who did not pretend to have any knowledge of finance at all—men who never made any claim to understand finance, but who have been observant—men watching the state of affairs, living amongst the various centres of population in the colony, and noting what was going on around them—told the honorable gentleman at that time that he must be prepared for such a state of affairs as we have had shown to us to-day. He tried to carry on the extravagant system of government of the Vogel Ministry without making any adequate provision for the expenditure, such as the Vogel Ministry invariably did. Does anybody believe for a moment that if Sir Julius Vogel had been on those benches we should have now a deficiency of £900,000 without anything in the world to show for it? If the present Colonial Treasurer had been there he would have made provision for the expenditure last year. If there had been any deficiency at all it would have been a very small one, and would have been provided for in such a way that there would be no danger whatever to the colony. Sir Julius Vogel never shrank from imposing taxation. He made taxation increase with the expenditure. I am convinced that if Sir Julius Vogel or the present Colonial Treasurer had been on those benches we should not have seen the state of affairs which now exists. It has been caused through the fault of another so-called financier, and his ignorance of the circumstances of the people he tried to rule. This is where I differ from the honorable member for Waitemata. We have often talked of these matters together, and I know that he holds the same views as I do. Of course, in his delicate position at this moment it would have been very incon-

venient for him to have come down and told the whole truth; and he only told part of the truth. It would have been inconvenient for him to have said that Sir Julius Vogel was an imposition, but that an honorable gentleman who lately sat upon those benches was a greater imposition. I quite recognized the difficulty of his position. I grieved for him, for I knew that nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to show that half the blame was attributable to the honorable member for Wanganui, who, as a financier, was a failure. The real blame of the present position of affairs rests on the shoulders of those honorable gentlemen who preceded my friend the Colonial Treasurer on those benches. The honorable gentleman said—rather unfairly, I thought—that the Colonial Treasurer had denounced the finance of his predecessor. The honorable gentleman did no such thing. My honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer denounced nobody; he introduced no debatable matter in his Statement; he introduced no argument of any sort. He came down with a plain statement of figures, and told us precisely how the finance stood, without imputing blame to anybody, without making a single political allusion during the whole of his speech. He did here and there throw out a suggestion to the House that honorable members might think it their duty to inquire more closely into the details of the Native expenditure. I sincerely hope that the House will adopt that suggestion and see what it all means. I may be wrong in supposing that the honorable gentleman intended that as a hint for the House to act upon; but, if he did, that was the only thing that could bear a political interpretation in his speech. He by no means denounced the finance of his predecessors; he referred to them in no way whatever. He simply made a straightforward Statement to the House, and sat down at the very point when it might have been expected that he would have shown grounds for blaming those who had preceded him. My honorable friend was a little unfair in what he said on that point. Well, the honorable gentleman said he was not here last year, and knew nothing of what took place in this House; but he found it stated that a majority of fourteen in the House were unable to compel the Colonial Treasurer at the time to bring down a Financial Statement. There was a scene for the pencil of the artist to depict. The scene was simply this: that we, with a majority of fourteen in the House, tried our very utmost to get a Financial Statement out of the honorable gentleman; and no Financial Statement on earth could anybody get out of him. It was not a question of a majority; it was a question of absolute emptiness. You cannot squeeze blood out of a turnip; you cannot squeeze a Financial Statement out of a gentleman who has no two ideas on the subject of finance. We did all we could to assist him in every way, and to get him to deliver himself of some sort of exposition of finance; but the honorable gentleman was as innocent of finance as a child. He knew nothing about it. We brought all the pressure we could to bear. Sometimes we urged him; sometimes we stimulated and spurred

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him. We gave him six weeks to get up this unfortunate Statement, and it all ended in smoke. When the honorable gentleman came down, the House was crowded. All the usual forms had been gone through for receiving the Statement. All we know is, that he mumbled out a clause from the Appropriation Act; he then sat down, and afterwards moved the adjournment of the House. That was absolutely all we got. Still, we believed that there would be a Statement in *Hansard*—a printed document. In fact, if I remember rightly, the honorable gentleman hinted as much—that there would be a printed Statement. When we got *Hansard* we found that the reporter had had to apologize for the fact that no Financial Statement whatever was delivered. That is the history of the matter. The honorable member for Waitemata was enjoying himself, reclining on his golden gondola on the canal at Venice, admiring the beauty of the scenery of Europe, when the majority of fourteen were talking away days together to try to squeeze a Financial Statement out of the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey). I can assure the honorable gentleman that Maclise, with his best pencil, could not have made anything of that scene but a very plain painting indeed. There was no romance about it at all—nothing that I would like to see painted on the walls of this chamber. It was a miserable, melancholy scene, such as I hope never will be repeated in this House as long as responsible government exists. There was a man at the head of affairs, assuming the office of Colonial Treasurer, who was absolutely incapable of giving to the House one word of information about finance—who was unwilling or unable to give the House the slightest information on finance. The honorable gentleman then went on to say that my honorable friend the late member for Wanganui, Sir William Fox, had threatened to refuse a loan or supplies, but the honorable gentleman the member for the Thames said, "You shall grant supplies, you shall grant a loan, and we will not accept your conditions." The honorable gentleman was either dreaming, or else he has been entirely misinformed by some of those associates in whose company he sits so often. I can assure the honorable gentleman nothing of the sort took place. It is quite true the honorable member for the Thames did come and make an exhibition of himself by telling us, "You shall do this, and you shall do the other," amid the roars of laughter of this House; but, Sir, we never threatened anything of the kind. Sir, William Fox, when he was trying to get the Colonial Treasurer to give us something about finance, said: [Extract read.] The honorable gentleman then went on to show that there had been cases, or that there might be cases, in which it would be proper for an Opposition, in the situation in which we then stood, to refuse supplies. He showed that there would be a constitutional ground for doing so; but he said that, as a party, we were determined to follow the very broadest lines of the Constitution, and on no account whatever to object either to the Loan Bill or to supplies. This is a matter of history—

Opposition last year absolutely declined to get the public business in any possible form, Sir, the honorable gentleman comes and jeers at us, and tells us it was entirely not that the Loan Bill was passed and that no such Statement was made. I can assure you of nothing of the kind. We had to put the circumstance with which we were faced—namely, a Colonial Treasurer who absolutely nothing about the duties of his post, but, as to threatening him and being obliged to pass the Loan Bill by him, it was not a little *coup d'état* on the part of my friend, who came down, and “shalled,” “sn’ted,” and “won’ted” like a spoilt child, stir up the waning courage of his supporters.

That was the whole story, which I had never require to be mentioned again in this House. As to our passing the Loan Bill, Sir, I feel that we really took an enormous responsibility upon ourselves. I felt it at the time I expressed it at the time. On the third of that Bill I was one of the very few up in the House and denounced the proposals in the last degree reckless and unwarranted.

I felt that in doing what I did in supporting the Bill at all I was virtually betraying the interests of those whom I represented and of the colony. But that certainly was my opinion of the people at the time; and in this House who would have had the courage to oppose the Loan Bill would have had no poor chance of being returned to Parliament. Not that I cared for that, because I denounced it on the hustings, reckless borrowing of money. I stated in debate, and boldly stated, as every honorable member will recollect, that it was a recklessness, entirely unwarranted except by necessity of the occasion, as represented by honorable gentlemen who were then on those benches.

We had no option. We were compelled to pass that Loan Bill. It was not a question of a majority. Neither Sir William Fox nor any one else in this House would have got a vote to follow him into the lobby against the Bill. We had to pass it, and I was one of those to whom it was a very bitter task indeed.

There is one other point in the speech of the honorable member for Waitemata to which I like to refer, and that is the extraordinary statement he made about the Vogel Government. The honorable gentleman, I am afraid, Julius Vogel still resting very badly on his laurels. I can recollect that when Sir Vogel was in this House the passages between those two honorable gentlemen were delightful to listen to. I never knew any honorable member for Waitemata rise to such heights of satirical eloquence as he did in denouncing the Colonial Treasurer of that day, turning him into ridicule before the members of this House. I am bound to say he got a Roland for his Oliver, because Sir Vogel was apt to hit back, and he used it with very good effect. But the honorable member might leave him alone now. No one in this House had a greater objection to Sir

Julius Vogel throughout the whole of his career than I had; but I believe I shall always remember with satisfaction that from the time when he left this House I never once referred to him in a depreciatory manner, and for the simple reason that he was not here to defend himself, and that we might be judging very wrongly the motives which actuated him. And I was rather sorry to hear the honorable gentleman—ungenerously, I thought—striking an absent man—damaging the reputation of an absent man, and fighting his battles over again with one who would have fought hard enough with him had he been present, but who cannot answer his attacks. The honorable gentleman gave the House the impression that the Vogel-Atkinson Government were something like Sir Robert Walpole's Governments—that they governed this House by open and barefaced corruption; and the assertions he made on that subject were perfectly marvellous. He told us that the corruption even inside the House had reached such a point that the Government had to bring in a Bill to prevent members of Parliament from being corrupted. Then he told us that, after that, the corruption of members went on to such a dreadful extent that they had to bring in another Bill to whitewash those who had brought themselves under the penalties of the Act. Now, does the honorable member really know what the Act was which he tells us was an Act to whitewash members of this House who had brought themselves under the penalties of the law by their corrupt practices in relation to the Government? One member of the Government—the present Premier, I think—had been appointed to the Executive Council in contravention of a technicality of the Disqualification Act—absolutely nothing else—and that, too, without salary. This appointment was found on inquiry to be a violation of the technical provisions of the law, and it was quaintly proposed by Mr. Stout that the honorable gentleman should be declared a half-caste within the meaning of the law, and that would set him all right. The fact was, it was nothing in the world more than a pure technicality. We passed a little Bill through all its stages at once, and the thing was set perfectly right; and that little Bill, which we passed through all its stages at a sitting, and which was a mere form and nothing else, is the Act which the honorable gentleman tells this House was passed in order to indemnify a number of honorable gentlemen who, by their corruption, had brought themselves within the scope of the law. There is no occasion, in my mind, to make things out worse than they have been in the past. They are quite bad enough in the present to occupy all the attention we shall be able to give them. I shall conclude my remarks by saying this: that if one thing more than another could convince me that this Government ought to be left in office unmolested, and without being harassed by any premature vote of want of confidence on the part of this House, it is the statement of affairs which has been brought down by the Colonial Treasurer to-day. I say that on an occasion of this sort we ought, as far as possible—and we can do it if we choose—to

lay aside the violence of party, and take into consideration the grave dangers which affect the interests of every inhabitant of the colony. I say that the position we stand in to-day is a more seriously alarming one than any in which we have stood for the last ten years or more. It is the more serious for this reason: that, although in the year 1867 or 1868 the finances were as bad as they are now, and the difficulties and burdens weighing upon the public then were even greater than they are now, at that time the country was accustomed to hardship and privation; the people were accustomed to self-denial; they had been educated by the Ministry of that day to understand what rigid economy was; and it was possible, during all those trying times, to govern the country without subjecting the people to any grievous burdens, and without giving rise to any violent disruption of the system of government. By this time the country has become debauched with borrowed money, and the people have been led by a system of extravagance, fostered by a period of unexampled prosperity, to believe that the evil day will never come. Now the evil day has come, and the people are not at all in the frame of mind to face their difficulties that they were in during the disastrous period of 1868. I say that in a new Parliament like this, when we have had such a short time to form differences of opinion on personal questions, or anything of that kind, we ought to be able to raise ourselves above party considerations, and fairly, firmly, sincerely, honestly, and straightforwardly to grasp the financial position of the day, and do our very utmost, by helping each other, by mutual co-operation and assistance, to endeavour to pull the colony out of the terrible position which my honorable friend assures us it is in.

Mr. PYKE.—We have heard a great deal during the present session respecting a waste of the time of the House and the country. I want to know who is wasting the time of the House and of the country now. There is not the slightest objection to suspend the Standing Orders and pass this Bill through all its stages to-night, if the Government are willing to do it.

Mr. HALL.—Who began it?

Mr. PYKE.—The honorable member must have a very short memory indeed if he does not remember that he and his colleagues began it. I am not going to address myself to the question. I want to draw the attention of the House and of the country to this fact: that there is no opposition to the motion before the House—that we are prepared to vote for it without one word of debate.—(Oh, oh.)—We will consent to suspend the Standing Orders, and pass the Bill through all its stages, so that the public business shall not be delayed, so that the whole matter may go to the other branch of the Legislature to-morrow, and so that the money so urgently required, according to the Statement of the Treasurer, may be obtained. If the Government will only allow this matter to proceed, it can be done to-night; and, if there be any delay, upon their heads it rests. It is they who are obstructing the business of the country—they, the gentlemen who sit on the Government benches, are obstructing

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their own business and the business of the country for a factious purpose. The only object they have in view is to prolong this debate so that their own proposal may not receive the assent of the House to-night, so that they may keep the thing going until next Friday, in order to ransack the pigeon-holes and see if they can find something there to bring down to the House. Why, Sir, I am greatly disappointed. I came down here to-night expecting to hear some great disclosures, expecting to hear all the great scandals which it was alleged would be exposed. Where are the great disclosures? What has it all amounted to? It amounts to this: A statement from the Treasurer, supported afterwards by the Premier, that the members of this House had never studied the public accounts, and therefore did not know how far the public revenue was in arrears. Why, Sir, I venture to say that there are not ten men in this House who did not know as much as we were told to-night before the Treasurer got up. Speaking with all due respect to parliamentary authority, I think it was somewhat an impertinence to make use of such a remark as that respecting the representatives of the people. I beg to inform the honorable gentlemen who sit on those benches that the representatives of the people know as much about the public accounts as they do, or perhaps a little more, after all their ransacking. I am not at all surprised at the statements which have been made. I believe they are exaggerated and highly coloured. It is only natural that they should be so. But to tell me that not six members of this House were aware of the dreadful state of the finances is to make one of the most absurd statements I ever heard within the walls of the House. Any man who can read, or who knows the difference between the figure 1 and the figure 9, must surely have been able to understand them. The Government have disclosed nothing new. They have had more than a week; they have ransacked the pigeon-holes: what have they found out? Where are these grave scandals? Why, if they were twelve months in office they would find no grave scandals. They would only find that they have discovered a mare's-nest and nothing else. I say to Ministers now, Why don't you get on with your business? We won't obstruct you. We'll pass your Bill through all its stages to-night if you wish us to do it; but if you persist in talking against time, as you are doing now, the country shall know that it is the Government and their supporters who are obstructing the business, and not the members of the Opposition.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I cannot allow this debate to close without making a few remarks on the Statement of the Colonial Treasurer. Whatever struggles there may be between the two sides of the House to obtain possession of the Government benches, it is to my mind a matter of far greater importance that the credit of the colony should be maintained; and it struck me as a very serious matter that a gentleman to whom I have always listened with the greatest respect and attention should make a Statement in this House so much calculated to depreciate our credit as

the Statement of the Colonial Treasurer. I was sorry to observe, when the honorable gentleman made that Statement, that he did not, with that honesty which usually characterizes his statements, refer to what was unquestionably the great cause of the deficiency in the revenue last year. And when he pointed out that nearly a million of money would be required to meet that deficiency he ought to have shown that, as it was, that was quite within the reach of the people of the colony. All those who heard the Statement of the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance) last year, must be aware that he took credit for a very large sum which was expected to be derived from the sale of the Waimate Plains; and the non-receipt of that money largely accounts for the deficiency. A great deal has been said about the unwisdom of reserving from sale a large amount of land in Canterbury. I understood the honorable member for Geraldine to say that 800,000 acres in that province had been reserved from sale; but I do not regard this as a deplorable state of things, for it must be borne in mind that we have preserved the public estate to that extent. Whether the land is of the quality stated or not, we have reserved more than enough to cover the loan asked for. The increased value given to this land by the formation of the railways will be quite equal to the amount of the loan. I say that this statement as to the deficiency is one that ought not to have been made unless it had been plainly shown how easily the deficiency could be covered. The Treasurer must be aware—and I say this with all respect—that he is himself to a large extent responsible for the deficiency. He was a member of the Government which introduced this system of subsidies. The honorable gentleman says there is a deficiency of £900,000. I am not prepared to admit that until I see the printed statement of accounts; but I may point out that there are two ways of meeting the deficiency—either by increasing the taxation or by reducing the expenditure. Now, I apprehend that without increasing the taxation such a reduction could be made in the estimates as would bring them quite within the limit of our means. I believe I am correct in saying that the subsidies to local bodies amount to £250,000.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—£500,000.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Very well; there is one very large item which could be considerably reduced; and I believe the Native expenditure could also be largely reduced. Then, again, the Statement was unfair in this respect: The estimate of revenue for the year was taken far lower than it need be. The honorable gentleman said he expected to receive from taxation £1,500,000; for services rendered, £1,300,000; and he reduced the revenue from the Land Fund to £380,000. Now, I think that, as the railways are made, the Land Fund will increase so much as to bring the revenue something nearer the mark. I should really like to hear from the Colonial Treasurer that the position of the colony is not so bad as he makes out. With his eminent ability, I am sure he could as easily show a surplus if he wished to do so.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Sir, it seems to me

that throughout the Treasurer's Statement there runs an apparent wish to damage the late Ministry. The honorable gentleman made his Statement so unnecessarily gloomy that, if it should be telegraphed Home, as it may be, it would very materially interfere with the raising of the loan. I am sure the honorable gentleman would not wish it to have that effect; but I do not see that it can have any other than a very damaging effect upon the colony. Now, I wish to prove to the House—and I think the honorable gentleman himself will acknowledge the correctness of the statement—that there is no real cause for alarm, or for the grave censure which he cast on the late Government. I understand that one of the most grave charges against the late Government is that no Financial Statement has been made for fifteen months. Now, there was nothing I regretted more than that no Financial Statement was made before the want-of-confidence motion came on for discussion last session. I will go further, and say that I think it was a cruel wrong to the country to bring on a want-of-confidence motion before the Government had had an opportunity of showing the position of the finances of the colony. It was not a question with me who should occupy those benches; for I regard that as a small matter compared with the necessity of putting before the people of the colony a statement of the financial position in such a manner that they could understand it. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government was not in the House last session, when the present Government party was led by Sir William Fox, who never gave the Government of the day an opportunity to come down with a Financial Statement; and, looking at the matter as a colonist who would like to see the credit of the colony stand high in the Home-country, I say that I regret nothing so much as the fact that last session, with indecent haste, and solely, as it seemed to me, from a desire to occupy the Government benches, those gentlemen refused to allow a statement of the finances to be placed before the country. The honorable gentleman says that we are £80,000 short of the estimate of last year. That is quite true. I think the Treasurer admits that that is the amount we should be short if the land-tax had been collected. Now, I will ask if the late Government can be accused of having over-estimated the income when, in the month of July of last year when they made their Statement, everything was *coulour de rose*, and the land revenue was coming in in an almost extraordinary manner. The present Colonial Treasurer never objected to the estimate of the land revenue. On the contrary, he himself expected that there would be a very large revenue from the sale of the Waimate Plains.

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—To prove that the honorable gentleman did, it is sufficient to mention that he objected to any portion of the usual 20 per cent. being taken from the receipts from land sales in the Patca District for railway purposes. He said, This is the first time the country is likely to derive any benefit from the land sales; and he protested against the deduction.

That shows that he expected to get a considerable amount from the land sales in the district; and, when he expected it, was the Colonial Treasurer of the time wrong in expecting it? Well, Sir, there was £80,000 short; and that, considering the depression which last year existed all over the colony, was a very small amount indeed. Now we come to the present session. I understand from my honorable friend the late Minister for Public Works that the estimates on which the Colonial Treasurer relies as showing the expenditure of the department are estimates which were furnished by the department, which had not been yet sanctioned by the Minister, and which the Minister was very likely to cut down considerably. The honorable gentleman knows very well that the estimates of the Under Secretary of a department are estimates that would cover the whole expenditure that he would wish to see incurred; but the Minister of the day, having regard to the finances of the country, is bound to cut them down if possible. If it is the case that they can be cut down, that will go largely to decrease the deficit of £98,000. I have never taken a very sanguine view of the amount to be derived from the land revenue, and I think it is very likely the late Treasurer did rather over-estimate the amount to be derived from that source. I do not touch upon the expenditure, because we cannot go into the anticipated expenditure for the present year until we have the estimates before us, when we shall have to consider them very carefully, and say what ought to be the expenditure—not merely accept what the Under Secretaries may propose. The Colonial Treasurer dwelt very strongly on the fact of the late Minister for Public Works anticipating the loan. He said it was a very wrong thing, and also that it was unsound, and showed a reckless mode of action. But, Sir, I ask, has this never been done before, when the honorable gentleman was himself on those benches in former days? Of course it has been. Take the four-million loan. When Sir Julius Vogel went Home to raise that loan, the honorable gentleman was his colleague. He (Sir Julius Vogel) said he must have the money, for the colony was in a "mess." Those are the words, and they can be seen in the Blue Books now. The money was to be raised at all hazards, and Sir Julius Vogel went to the Rothschilds, and, in effect, got them to back the bill, so as to raise the money. And yet now the Colonial Treasurer denounces the late Minister for Public Works for anticipating the loan. That has always been done by this House. We never yet waited for the money to be raised before we contracted for works; and my honorable friend should be the last to denounce the late Minister for Public Works, when he was himself a party to a very similar transaction.

Major ATKINSON.—I was not.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—My honorable friend was a member of the Ministry, although he was not Treasurer at the time. And now allow me to say a few words in conclusion; for I am not going to take up the time of the House. I agree with my honorable friend near me that it is far too grave a question to use it for a display of

oratorical language or of chaff. I have to charge the Colonial Treasurer with having brought about this state of things. In July, 1877, he stated that his finance was a far-seeing and safe finance. He then said there would be no necessity for increasing taxation; that his finance was far-seeing and safe. Sir, his finance was this: that he partly covered the expenditure by Treasury bills. That was the honorable gentleman's finance. He gave subsidies to the Road Boards and to the counties that never could have been paid out of the ordinary revenue without the issue of Treasury bills. That was no safe finance; and I say that, had the House not seized the Land Fund in 1877, so far from there being a deficiency of only £80,000, we should have had a deficit of £700,000. And yet the honorable member called his finance far-seeing and safe. And now he is Colonial Treasurer—with great honesty of purpose, we all agree; but are his antecedents in finance such that we can trust him to bring our finances into a proper position? He objected to the putting-on of taxation, and he issued Treasury bills. Taking his own figures, we are landed this year in a deficit of £900,000. What did the late Government do to make that deficit? All they did was to strike off some tea and sugar duties, which would have amounted to about £60,000 for the last half-year, and they put on a land-tax that made up nearly a like amount; so that, at the most, all the late Government did in the way of reducing the revenue would have been not more than £10,000 or £20,000, if they had collected the land-tax. Wherein, then, are the former Treasurer (Mr. Ballance) or the late Treasurer (Sir G. Grey) responsible for the deficit this year? I want the honorable gentleman to show us that. Had the Opposition allowed the Financial Statement to be made at the beginning of July, last session, the country would have seen then what has been foretold to the honorable gentleman years ago by the honorable member for Bruce and others—that his system of finance would end one day in a deficit that would astonish the people. And it has come now. His system of finance never met the difficulty in the face. He put forth to the House that he was going to get an income out of land revenue that never came, and he tided the difficulty over by issuing Treasury bills. If the honorable gentleman had done what he was pressed to do—if he had said, "We cannot pay these subsidies out of ordinary revenue; we must not issue Treasury bills in anticipation of land revenue;" or had he put on taxation two or three years ago, we should never have been landed in the difficulty in which we now find ourselves. But, Sir, I agree with the honorable member for Waitemata that, if this House can be got to meet fairly in the face our financial position, and to say that this extravagant expenditure on public works which are not reproductive shall cease, and, I also say, if it puts a stop to the purchase of Native land, which I do not believe will be reproductive, the financial difficulty of the present time would not be an unmixed evil. I think a country is somewhat the same as an individual: until it sees that it is short of money, it cannot find out where it

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can retrench. Having said that I believe we are in a grave position, I trust the finances of the country will be dealt with seriously by honorable members, as such a very important question deserves to be dealt with, for the good of the country, and with less regard as to who shall occupy the Treasury benches.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I am very sorry to trouble the House at this late hour, but I must, in self-defence, say a few words. One honorable gentleman, during the recess—I need not mention his name—told his constituents that he always voted with the Government during last session. This was a matter of very great surprise to the person who heard him speak, because he was known to be a staunch Oppositionist. When he was asked how this came about, he said, "Oh! half the Government always go into one lobby and the other half into another, and as there are only two lobbies I am always obliged to vote with the Government." It appears to me that that is exactly the position which the Opposition have taken up to-night in regard to the finances. They must be right, because half declare there is no deficit, and that it is quite unreasonable to think the matter at all serious; while the other half declare there is a terrible deficit, and we must look it fairly in the face. I do not know how we are to deal with these honorable gentlemen. However, as the hour is late, perhaps we had better put off the discussion to a more convenient time. But I must say this: that, if they really want to discuss the finances as a serious matter, as the honorable member for Akaroa does, I would ask them—and especially that honorable gentleman—to be more exact in their facts. I would recommend to that honorable gentleman a course of light reading, in order to prepare himself for the task; and I would ask him to glance his eye over my Financial Statements, and then he will see that everything he has stated to-night in regard to myself and my finance, and my action about the loan, is absolutely incorrect. I shall be quite prepared to meet him—not to-night, but at a more convenient period, and I ask honorable gentlemen to suspend judgment in the meantime. One thing I preached from the very beginning—from the time when I first took the Treasury in 1875—was the absolute necessity for mapping out carefully beforehand the amount of money we had to spend, and the amount of money we ought to spend every year. All the time I was in the Treasury, for three years, I carefully adhered to this plan, and the Government always distinctly stated the amount it would expend in every case. So much for that statement of the honorable gentleman. Then, with regard to his statement of the Government of which I was a member anticipating the four-million loan: that statement was a suppression of the truth, or rather it was an insinuation of half a truth. The honorable gentleman knows very well that a large portion of the four-million loan was undoubtedly anticipated; but that was done before I joined the Government, and I had nothing whatever to do with it. The honorable gentleman knows perfectly well that contracts had been entered into, and liabilities

incurred, before I joined the Ministry. Such a thing never occurred after I joined; and I will tell the House this: that during the whole time I was in office the only borrowing power we asked for was to the extent of about £1,300,000, including Treasury bills; and when I quitted office I left in the Treasury £1,000,000 of that money, and the Treasury bills were used in assisting Auckland, Wellington, and Westland. Honorable members can see, from that, how accurate the statement of the honorable gentleman was. I never stated that taxation was not required. What I said was, that at that particular time, 1877, while our revenue was equal to our expenditure, while our railways were in an incomplete state, while we did not know what our requirements were, and we knew that our liabilities were enormous, it was unwise, with the enormous amount of administration which the change in our Constitution had thrown on the Government, to start a new system of taxation. That was the position I took up. Let me say one word with regard to what the honorable member said about the estimated expenditure. He tells the House that these estimates were left by the late Government in a very incomplete state as furnished by the Under Secretaries—that Ministers did not revise them—and he was assured by the late Minister for Public Works that they would have been greatly cut down. I am bound to accept that as far as it goes; but all I can say is that, if that was the practice pursued by the late Government, it was exceedingly unfair to the Treasurer, and is a thing that was never done before. The invariable rule with regard to the estimates is this: The Treasurer, when the financial year comes round, calls upon each department to supply him with the estimates of the department. The Under Secretaries prepare these estimates; they go through them with the Minister for the department, and the estimates are then sent to the Treasurer, who looks through them, and if he is dissatisfied he goes to each Minister of the department. I always saw every Minister upon his particular estimates. After that process has been gone through they are referred to the Cabinet, and finally revised. In all the Governments with which I have been connected, Ministers always revised them before sending them to the Treasury. I may say, further, that they had been, I am informed, considerably added to since the late Colonial Treasurer (Mr. Ballance) went out of office. In what I said this evening regarding the estimates, I guarded against committing myself or the late Government to them; but I pointed out this significant fact, that the actual expenditure last year was £1,000,000, and that the estimates of expenditure which I submitted for consideration amounted to only £3,970,000. This was considerably under the actual expenditure of last year, and I pointed out that the expenditure, instead of having decreased year by year, had gradually increased. Therefore I should have been untrue to my duty had I represented to the House that I thought it was possible to make any great reduction in this expenditure. I said I thought it was not, and I think so now. If we are prepared to follow the

present system, I prophesy that the estimates, before they go through this House, will be increased rather than diminished. Then, with regard to the deficit: it is very easy for honorable gentlemen, with cheerful dispositions and without responsibility, to talk in an airy way about this deficit, but if the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance) were on these benches he would never give utterance to the speech he has given utterance to to-night. When I came down here to-night I came with a full sense of the responsibility that rested upon me. I knew that the statement I was going to make was damaging to our credit, and I should have been exceedingly glad to escape from making it, if I could; but I had a duty to perform to this House and to the country. I went carefully through the estimates of revenue, with the view of increasing them, and I am afraid I put several items down for larger amounts than will probably be received; it is possible that I may be wrong in this expectation, and I hope I am. But the fact remains that even the late Colonial Treasurer admits the deficit, but apparently thinks so lightly of it as to speak of it as nothing—as being only a small amount of £500,000 or £600,000. To my mind it shows a most terrible lack of due appreciation of the difficulties of our situation. The honorable gentleman may have some grand scheme, and I hope he will enlighten us; but I have given facts and figures which honorable gentlemen can examine for themselves. I may state that the Customs revenue for the last quarter amounted to £306,000. My estimate for the full year is £1,200,000, and I venture to think, after some little consideration of the subject, that the revenue of this quarter is the largest that will be received during the year. Honorable gentlemen can see from this how much the deficit will be reduced thereby. Then, with regard to the Land Fund, I have estimated that at £388,000. The Land Fund for last quarter was £41,000. Whether honorable gentlemen think that is an under-estimate or not, of course I cannot tell; but, at any rate, I put it down at what I think is the highest amount I am justified in submitting to the House. On the other hand, I submitted the estimates of the late Government, and I showed that by them there was a deficit of over £600,000, and by the other estimates a deficit of some £900,000; and I fear my estimates will not be shaken. Just one word with regard to the statement of the late Minister for Public Works. The late Colonial Treasurer (Mr. Ballance), also upon the authority of the late Minister for Public Works, stated that the figures I had submitted to meet the requirements of the department, showing what would be spent out of the Public Works Fund, were entirely erroneous, and that not more than £100,000 per month would be spent by the Minister for Public Works.

Mr. MACANDREW.—No; not the requirements of the department. I understood that the figures sanctioned by the late Government were what the honorable member was talking about. I understood him to say that the late Government had entered into contracts which would require two millions of money to meet them

before June. That was the statement I was referring to. I was utterly amazed at that statement; it took the breath out of me. I cannot conceive how such a statement could be made.

Major ATKINSON.—That is exactly what I meant by "the department." I meant that the department had entered into contracts for that amount. The honorable gentleman says he is amazed; but I am not surprised, seeing the way I found these matters in the offices; for I found that the Public Works Department goes on its own way rejoicing, and apparently considers that the duty of the Treasury is simply to provide any amount of money it thinks proper to ask for. The first thing I did when I came into office was to send for the Secretary to the Treasury—a gentleman thoroughly competent for his work—and I asked him what were the payments from the Public Works Fund that we should be required to make for the next two or three months, and he said, "I cannot tell you." I said, "Do you not know what the Public Works Department wants?" He said, "No; we do not get anything from the Public Works Department until they send in their vouchers." I said, "Is not that rather peculiar?" He said, "It is; but they appear to consider it unnecessary to give the Treasury any intimation of contracts entered into until the money is required." I thereupon directed that an estimate should be obtained from the Public Works Department as to the actual amount of money month by month that we should be required to pay. I now hold that estimate in my hands, showing the estimated amount required during the financial year 1879–80 to meet the actual liabilities incurred to the 31st December, 1879. This estimate was handed to me by the Under Secretary to the honorable gentleman (Mr. Knowles), and is signed by Mr. W. A. Thomas, the Accountant to the Public Works Department. I have always found the permanent officers of the department to be certainly reliable. Now, the honorable gentleman said that there is no one month in which we shall have to pay more than £100,000. We have that on the authority of the late Colonial Treasurer (Mr. Ballance). Well, in this document which I hold in my hand the Public Works Department say that in the month of October they will want £163,000; during the month of November, £170,000; and during the month of December, £182,000. The total estimate of what will be required between the 10th October and the 31st December, 1879, is £516,000. Of course, if there is any inaccuracy in that return, at any rate it does not rest with me. When I get an official statement from a public office I am bound to state it to the House; and, if I make a misuse of it, it is quite clear that the House will call me to account. But until it is proved to the contrary this House will accept the statement furnished by the permanent officers of the department—the Accountant and Under Secretary—rather than the recollection of the Minister for Public Works, however capable he may be. Then, with regard to cutting off the subsidies. Some honorable gentlemen seem to think that we are going to get over the difficulty and do away with a considerable deficit by doing away with

Major Atkinson

the subsidies. But it is quite impossible to cut off the subsidies this year, whatever we may do afterwards, because there is no doubt at all that they are practically spent. We have permitted the County Councils and Road Boards to make their finance this year upon those subsidies; and therefore it is quite clear that, whatever we may do afterwards, we cannot cut them off this year. I am prepared to argue in favour of those subsidies. I believe in them thoroughly—that they are sound in principle, and can be defended upon principle. No doubt there is a difference of opinion on the subject, and when the proper time comes we will discuss it. Sir, I will not trouble the House further than to say that the remarks of the honorable member (Mr. Pyke) are hardly to the point. The debate, I think, has been conducted with some advantage. Certainly, Sir, the debate did not rise from anything upon our side of the House—certainly not, Sir; and, whatever may be the opinion of the honorable member for Akaroa in regard to the general tone of the Statement which I had the honor to submit to-night, I endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to guard myself against putting blame on any one. I made it perfectly impersonal. Undoubtedly blame is attachable to some persons for our present financial position. I am informed by honorable members opposite that a large portion of the blame attaches to me. If the honorable gentlemen are not culpable in this matter, nothing that I said could make them blamable; and, if I was responsible, then any colouring was against myself. But I endeavoured, and stated so distinctly, to throw no blame on anybody—to leave that for future consideration, as also to leave for future consideration the means of dealing with the state of our finances which I unfortunately had to reveal to this House. I beg to move, That the Standing Orders be suspended for the purpose of introducing and passing through all its stages a Bill to amend "The Public Revenues Act, 1878."

Bill introduced, and read a first, a second, and a third time.

Mr. HALL. — I should now like to know whether the House wishes to go further to-night. I beg to move, That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. SHEEHAN. — I hope the honorable gentleman will not break faith. His motion is distinctly breaking faith. We consented to this Bill being put through on the distinct understanding that No. 1 would afterwards be gone on with. I hope the honorable member will not break faith.

Mr. SPEAKER. — According to the Standing Orders, no new business can be taken after half-past twelve o'clock.

Mr. SHEEHAN. — There was a distinct understanding that No. 1 would be taken after this Bill was disposed of. I hope the Hon. the Premier will not break faith in the matter.

Mr. HALL. — I do not think the honorable gentleman will, when he has sat in the House with me somewhat longer, find that he has occasion to ask me not to break faith. There was certainly an understanding that we should go back to No. 1; but there was no understanding that we should continue to sit till five or six in the morning. I

appeal to every impartial member on the other side whether there was such an understanding.

Mr. SHEEHAN. — Perhaps, Sir, you might read what the Order of the House was.

Mr. SPEAKER read the Order of the House, and ruled that no new business could be proceeded with after half-past twelve a.m.

Mr. PYKE. — I would like to ask the Hon. the Premier whether he will put that Bill first when the House next assembles. Will he keep faith by bringing that Bill on first?

Mr. HALL. — I will say this: that we are anxious to go on with the business of the country; and, if honorable members are at all reasonable, there is no reason why there should be any loss of time. Our conduct has been very much misrepresented. We claim the opportunity—which need occupy very little time—of placing our policy before the House and the country. If honorable gentlemen will agree to give us that opportunity, we will take their want-of-confidence motion as the first Order of the day upon the earliest date they can reasonably expect. This is a fair offer. If they will not accept that offer, they cannot force us and they shall not force us to take it earlier.

Mr. HISLOP. — I submit, Sir, that the Order, having been called upon, cannot be considered as being new business. Business which has already been considered by the House during the day, and has been postponed in order that another matter may be considered, with the express understanding that it will be taken up again so soon as the intervening matter has been disposed of, cannot be regarded as new business. It has been usual in past sessions to take Orders of the day—a great number of them—and postpone them for the express purpose of taking them up after half-past twelve. I submit that when business has been actually called on, and an Order has been made by the House with regard to it, it should not be treated as new business.

Mr. SPEAKER. — The Order was made supposing that the Bill which it made way for would be disposed of early in the evening. It was never supposed that it would come on at so late an hour. It is clearly new business, and it is contrary to the Standing Orders to bring it on for consideration now.

Mr. PYKE. — Sir, I should like to ask a question of the Premier. The Electoral Bill is one of grave importance, and I wish to know from the leader of the Government when he will bring that Bill up for consideration and discussion. That is all I wish to ask him.

Mr. HALL. — I really cannot fix a date at which the Bill shall be brought up. It is not right that such a question should be put to me, and that an answer should be demanded at once. I entirely deny the right of the honorable member to expect me to answer that question at once. I have sat many years in Parliament, and have never seen any precedent for such a thing. I tell the honorable gentleman that he will have no good reason to complain of any delay on the part of the Government. We are only too anxious to bring the Bills forward, and to get them disposed of.

Mr. READER WOOD. — I apprehend, Sir,

that the rules of the House will settle this question. Leave to introduce Bills must always take precedence of other business.

Mr. HISLOP.—I should like to ask the honorable gentleman whether he intends the motion of want of confidence to go on. I am sorry the honorable gentleman has denied the right of a majority of this House to express their opinion with regard to whether the Government of which he is the head has any right to sit upon those benches. If the honorable gentleman does take up that position, I can only say this: that, if there are only five persons with me, the Government shall get no supplies while they adopt such a position as they seem now to be adopting. Such a position has never previously been heard of in any country in which constitutional government has been adopted. As a person who has lived in New Zealand pretty well all his life, I feel degraded when I find the head of the Government rising to make such a statement to this House as has been made to-night. I only hope that the honorable gentlemen, for the sake of responsible government, for the purpose of showing us on this side of the House that there is some sincerity in the lectures read to us by members on the other side of the House as to what is constitutional and proper under our form of government, will themselves act constitutionally now, and allow the motion to be brought forward. I have not spoken on this question before, but I must say I have been tempted to rise and answer the statements which have been made. As to there being any parallelism whatever between what has taken place now and what took place in 1877, no person who has the slightest knowledge of the history of the colony can fail to recognize that there is no parallel between the circumstances of the two occasions.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think that on the motion for adjournment a question of no-confidence in the Ministry can be discussed.

Mr. HISLOP.—I do not intend to discuss it, Sir. What I wish to discuss is the position which the Government has taken up with regard to that motion; and I submit that I have—

Mr. SPEAKER.—That would be bringing the motion into consideration.

Mr. HISLOP.—I apprehend not, Sir. What I wish to discuss is simply this: the position the Government have taken up in regard to the order of business, as indicated by the Premier to-night. The Premier said that he would take up a certain line, and it is his conduct in making that statement which I am discussing. That is my only reason for rising. I cannot allow such a statement as that which he has made to be made in this House without entering my protest, although I am a young member. With regard to what took place in 1877, honorable members will recollect that immediately the new Government took their seats on those benches a want-of-confidence motion was placed on the Order Paper. The Ministry at once gave every facility for discussing it, and it was discussed and decided upon. It was disposed of, being negatived by the casting vote of the Speaker, and then, immediately after that motion had been rejected, another want-of-

confidence motion was brought forward. There was a great difference between the positions of the respective Ministries. The Ministry who were turned out of office by Sir George Grey in 1877, were turned out for two reasons: one was—

Mr. WHITAKER.—I should like to ask your ruling, Sir, as a matter of order, whether debatable matter can be introduced in remarks made under the circumstances under which the honorable member for Waitaki is speaking, and, if so, whether any other member of the House will be in order in speaking in reply to him. I have not the slightest objection to his proceeding, so long as I have an opportunity of replying to him.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The same privilege will be accorded you as is accorded to any other member of the House. I can only say that it is laid down that under cover of a motion for adjournment it is not proper to introduce matters that are set down on the Order Paper for consideration, such as the present notice of no-confidence. When I interrupted the honorable member for Waitaki he was taking a course which would have brought that motion into consideration.

Mr. HISLOP.—Yes, Sir, perhaps I was; but I am now avoiding that. I was proceeding to say that when the Atkinson Ministry were turned out of office, in 1877, there were two reasons why they were turned out. The first was maladministration; and the second was their policy, or, rather, their want of any policy. The Ministry which came into office met with great opposition by reason of the fact that they were supposed to favour Separation, and a majority of the House was anxious to turn them out before their policy had been declared. A great many gentlemen said they would not vote with any Ministry that was headed by Sir George Grey, because he was a supporter of Separation; but afterwards, when the policy was brought down, and it was seen that Sir George Grey had no idea of proposing Separation, a number of members who were previously prepared to vote against him said that they were satisfied with the policy, and had no objection to the Ministry continuing in office. The honorable member for Egmont thereupon withdrew from further opposition. I submit there is a distinct difference between the position of the then Ministry and the position taken up by the Ministry at the present time. I believe there is one mode of getting quit of the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches, in spite of all the forms of the House being used to keep them in office; and, if they continue to defy constitutional usage, that course will be resorted to, although it will be an everlasting disgrace to the House and the colony. However, I hope that persons who, like the honorable member for Avon, have lectured this House upon all sorts of subjects, setting up a high standard of political morality, especially in reference to constitutionalism, will consider what they are doing, and not be instrumental in bringing about that which will be a disgrace to the colony.

Mr. MACANDREW.—It seems to me, Sir, that we must admit we, in our innocence, have been outflanked on this occasion. It would be

better to submit now; but we shall be wiser next time. It is getting late, and I would suggest an adjournment. No doubt we shall get this motion on to-morrow.

Mr. WHITAKER. — I think the honorable gentleman who has just sat down has very wisely come to the rescue, and I hope we shall now adjourn. But I cannot refrain from saying a few words with regard to the remarks which have fallen from the honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Hislop). I am sorry he lost his temper, because, although I have not had much experience in this House, I feel pretty sure that members who lose their temper will not receive very great consideration at the hands of the House. When you, Sir, gave your ruling that this was a new matter, and could not be taken after half-past twelve, that should have been final. I have heard that there is such a device in parliamentary warfare as "stone-walling," but this is the first time I have heard stone-walling proposed in this House, and I cannot let the opportunity go by of warning honorable gentlemen on the other side that they had better not proceed to that extremity. The temper of the House is such that it will not stand such proceedings, and the honorable member for Waitaki may be perfectly certain that many persons who sympathize with his party will desert that party if anything of that kind is tried. As to the reasons of the Premier for declining to discuss this want-of-confidence motion at present, it seems to me that they are good. The reasons are these: Our party has never ceased, from the time the late Government attempted to carry certain liberal measures into effect, to be charged with having a desire to resist those measures. Throughout the debate on the late want-of-confidence motion we were sneered at, taunted, and abused on this very point, and were called Conservatives—whatever that may mean in this colony—and we were told that, while we had Liberalism on our lips, our hearts were not sincere; that if we came into office we should never attempt to carry out liberal measures. Now, we say there are persons on this side of the House who are equally liberal with those on the other side. I say that we have a right to practically refute these accusations by showing the country that we really do mean to carry liberal measures, by bringing them before the country before the Government are compelled to vacate those benches. It is a duty that we owe to ourselves, and to our constituents, to show that we will support these liberal measures. We are not blindly to follow the leader of the Opposition in this matter. They have no right to compel us to consider a motion of want of confidence until such time as we have cleared ourselves from the accusations which the honorable member for Waitaki and others have brought against us from day to day. We ask nothing that is unreasonable or unconstitutional. In the House of Commons, when a new Government have come into power, no matter how small may be their majority, they have always been allowed to place their policy before the House and the country. I am speaking from positive knowledge of constitutional law, and I say unhesitatingly that that is the

case. If any honorable gentleman disputes my statement I can easily produce authorities which will prove its accuracy. I say, unhesitatingly, that that has been the invariable practice in the House of Commons. We are asking nothing more or less than the constitutional right of telling the country what we mean to do. This cannot occupy more than four or five days. When that is done, we have the full assurance of the Premier that he will give the honorable member an opportunity of bringing forward his motion of no-confidence. I cannot but think it unfair and unconstitutional to attempt to remove the Government from those benches until they have had an opportunity of showing the country what they really intend to do, and I am perfectly certain that honorable members will agree that we have a right to clear our characters before this House and before the country from the imputations that have been cast upon them. When we have done that, let the motion of want of confidence be brought forward. We will accept the verdict of the House upon it, and, if defeated, we will cheerfully submit to that defeat.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 15th October, 1879.

First Reading—Public Revenues Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

New Plymouth Gas Company Bill.

PUBLIC REVENUES BILL.

This Bill was received by message from the House of Representatives, and read a first time.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER. — Sir, I now move that this Bill be read a second time. As I informed the Council yesterday, it is necessary that a certain amount of money should be raised for the purpose of defraying the current expenditure of the Government. Several modes of raising the money were suggested; but the Government came to the conclusion that the easiest way would be to alter the sum of £400,000 in the Public Revenues Bill to £600,000, and to make it a temporary measure. If we were to pass a Debenture Bill, it would require a great many provisions similar to those contained in the Public Revenues Act. This Bill gives the Government power to borrow on deficiency bills the sum of £200,000, in addition to the £400,000. Provision is made that the £200,000 is to be raised during the present session, and that the Bill shall remain in force during that time only, leaving the whole question as to the way in which the finances are to be dealt with for future consideration. This Bill was indispensable, otherwise the payments by the Government would

be stopped. If the Council pass this Bill, the next measure I shall bring down will be a Bill giving authority to spend the money. Therefore I shall ask the Council to meet again to-morrow, at half-past seven, for the purpose of passing a Bill giving authority for spending the money which it is proposed to raise by this Bill.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—I will support the honorable gentleman in passing this Bill, as I am persuaded that such a measure is necessary for the public service. Whether or not this is the best mode of providing temporarily for the requirements of the State I by no means feel certain; but that the necessity exists for some such measure I think it my duty to bear witness. The other branch of the Legislature having practically agreed to pass the Bill without discussion, I can hardly see that it would be very well worth our while to consider whether this is or is not the best mode of providing for the public service. The honorable and learned gentleman has disappointed me in not bringing before this Council, in what I believe it is usual to call a "concrete form," some of those vague charges of extravagance that have been levelled in another place, and in the Press of the colony, against the Government of which I was a member. I feel sure that the more the financial transactions of the late Government are looked into the better they will bear scrutiny, and the less ground there will appear to be for the assertions so frequently made. It is true there has been a deficiency in the public revenue—chiefly in consequence of having depended so much on the land revenue. I did not attempt to disguise that this would require to be supplemented by fresh taxation, at the time of the passing of the Appropriation Bill. There is £300,000 short, undoubtedly, in the accounts for the next financial year, compared with any estimate we could make of land revenue and ordinary revenue and the expenditure of the country. Four months have elapsed without any provision being made, and that may be assumed to add another £100,000, and it is quite possible that there may be another £100,000 to be provided for through the failure of the land sales. The question which Parliament must consider this session will be, whether it will decrease the ordinary expenditure or raise this deficiency by taxation. There is no advantage to be gained by exaggerating the gap there is at present in our financial position as between revenue and expenditure; but, on the other hand, there is nothing to be gained by concealing it. Now, I am prepared to admit that somewhere about £500,000 must be provided for, either by taxation, by diminishing subsidies, or by reducing the departmental expenditure; the last of which I regard, from the experience of the past, as a hopeless task. That being the case, I take this opportunity of contradicting, as I am quite sure I am entitled to do, the exaggerated rumours which have gained currency as to the actual deficiency. In fact, I heard it stated recently within the precincts of this House, by what should be an authority, that the amount we require is double that which we shall really re-

quire; and such a statement, if not contradicted, is calculated to do a great deal of injury to this country, and is very much to be regretted. At the same time, I am happy to hear that testimony has been borne to the fact that the departmental expenditure of the late Government has been reasonable, and could not be reduced. That, to my mind, takes away the greater part of the blame which has been cast upon us for extravagance in administration; but, whether we are or are not interested in that, I beg honorable gentlemen to dismiss from their minds any idea that any great economy can be exercised by cutting down the salaries of Civil servants. I have given my best attention to the matter, and I assure honorable gentlemen that, if possible at all, it is possible only to a very limited extent to cut down the salaries or reduce the number of Civil servants. On the other hand, I do feel that in some of the departments the salaries are exceedingly and unfairly small. Therefore, Sir, we must seek outside of that for means of restoring the balance between our expenditure and our revenue. I think, considering that so much has been hinted upon this point against the Government, that honorable gentlemen will pardon me for having occupied a few minutes' time in drawing attention to the subject, and rebutting the accusations which have been so frequently made.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—Sir, although I should have liked to refrain from saying anything on the occasion of the second reading of this Bill, after hearing the statements which have fallen from the honorable and learned gentleman opposite, and the honorable and gallant gentleman who has just sat down, I feel bound, on my own part, to say a few words. I feel all the more responsibility to do so, because I have been one of those who systematically, since I have had the honor of being called to this Council, have taken every opportunity which presented itself to give, so far as a private individual might give, a warning to the country of the dangers into which we were running in our finance. And, Sir, I feel that, having taken the responsibility on myself on so many previous occasions of doing this, it is all the more incumbent upon me to express my dissent from the representations upon which the assent of this Council to the Bill now before us seems to be sought. Sir, I need not apologize to you for taking the proper parliamentary course in referring to the Ministerial Statement made in the other House last night, upon which this Bill is founded; because, although we know the parliamentary rule is rightly strict as to not referring to debates in the other House, we also know that we have a clear parliamentary right to refer to any Ministerial Statement made there. It is true that it would be extremely unwise for us to criticise Ministerial Statements made elsewhere, and we should, if we refer to them at all, limit ourselves as nearly as possible to assent or dissent; but there are occasions when it is impossible to refrain from referring to the broad lines of a Ministerial declaration. And I think it right, for my own part, to say that I do not consider that the country is in the position which is apparently ex-

Hon. Mr. Whitaker

hibited—although I do not say it was the intention of the Government so to exhibit it—in the Financial Statement that was made last night; because by that Statement, as it appears to me in reading it in the paper this morning, and hearing it as I did last night, the impression likely to be produced in the country, and likely to be produced in England, is this: that there is now a deficiency of £900,000 in the finances of the country; and I think we ought not to have any such idea expressed, and still less telegraphed to England, without declaring our dissent from the grave conclusions which that idea would carry with it. In a very few words I propose to say to the Council why I do not think that is the financial position of the country; and, in doing so, I hope I shall do proper justice to the Colonial Treasurer, because I cannot believe it could have been the intention of the Treasurer, or of my honorable and learned friend, in asking our assent to this Bill, to lead us to give our assent to the Bill under the belief that there is a deficiency of £900,000. Not only is it quite certain that the Colonial Treasurer did not say there is now a deficit of £900,000, but no budget could be possibly produced which could ever show such a deficit. It is utterly impossible that any Financial Statement or appropriations for the year could be made to show a deficiency of £900,000 in the public finance. All we are entitled to say, bearing in mind the constant warnings that have been given to the various Governments that have existed, is that there is a certain amount of deficit actually ascertained; but we are not entitled to say there is a deficiency of £900,000, because we know two things: first, that no such deficiency has been reached; and, secondly, as I have said, that no budget that could possibly be produced could ever allow such a deficiency to exist. Very well: then what I wish to add is this: It would be dangerous to our public credit, it would seriously endanger the success of the loan, if a cablegram should unfortunately appear in the *Times* one fine morning that "The Financial Statement has been made, and there is a deficit of £900,000." That, I say, would be a very dangerous, wrong, and inaccurate announcement to appear in England. Sir, whoever may be the Colonial Treasurer in this country, and whatever may be the budget which he proposes for our finance, this is absolutely certain: that his budget of this year will not do more than state the deficit which has accrued, and which we know has accrued, up to the time of existing appropriations—the 30th September just past—and that he will have to show how he means to prevent that deficit from being increased during the remaining period of the financial year. It is no use for us to say that if we adopt the estimates of last year, which were continued in a hurried manner for the first quarter of the existing financial year, and if this expenditure is continued, and if no other means are taken to replenish the public finances, we shall at the end of June next be driven into a deficit of £900,000. What would be thought of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England if, in presenting his budget to Parliament, with a revenue

of £80,000,000, he said that if a certain expenditure took place he would have a deficit of a quarter of his revenue, or twenty millions at the end of his financial year? Would he not be told to show how he would meet it? And what we have a right to expect from any Government—I don't care what Government it is which takes its place on those benches, and has the responsibility of directing the finance of the country—is that, when they tell us of the deficit that already exists, they should also let us know how the accumulation of that deficit is to be prevented; and I hold that it is not a sound finance to let it be said here or in England that we can by any possibility have a deficit of £900,000. That deficit, I repeat, does not exist, and never will exist, because, whoever may be the Treasurer, he will have to bring down a Statement to the House whose peculiar privilege it is to deal with it, which will show some means by which the augmentation of the existing deficit shall not be allowed. And I think it is the duty of every public man to prevent the serious dangers with which we are undoubtedly face-to-face, from being exaggerated into rumours of a much more alarming kind, whose effect may be so disastrous to the colony. It is all very well for us to serenely contemplate in this Council the conflict of parties which does not affect us; but, in the interests of public confidence in our resources and our solvency, it is of the highest importance that we should sustain our public credit and prevent even the chance of a scare, such as is likely to be created by the statement that there exists anything like the deficit which has been referred to.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—It is very important, Sir, that we should not have an exaggerated idea in regard to the difference which may exist between our year's revenue and our year's expenditure. At the same time, it seems to me equally important that we should not run away with an erroneous idea of a contrary nature upon the subject—an idea calculated to deceive ourselves and the public as to the true state of the case. I think that one of the worst features in colonial politics for some years past has been the apparent determination of politicians in New Zealand not to realize the true financial position of the colony—a determination, apparently, to shut their eyes to the inevitable consequences of the policy that was adopted; and, if we are to have that healthy system of finance that we should have, the first step toward its accomplishment will be thoroughly to realize our true position, and not allow ourselves any longer to be deceived in any respect. My honorable friend (Sir F. Dillon Bell) has told us that in his opinion there will be no deficit such as has been referred to, and that there cannot occur a deficit of £912,000. Well, there is at the present time undoubtedly a deficiency in existence. What the Colonial Treasurer has said is simply this: that between our ways and means as existing at the present time, and the expenditure, based upon the system which has hitherto prevailed, at the end of the year there must be—in the absence of retrenchment, and in the absence of fresh taxation—a deficit of £912,000. I have been carefully

through those figures, and I am forced to the conclusion that that is not depreciatory of the future circumstances of the colony. We know better now than the late Government did what is likely to be the Customs revenue of the colony for the present year. The experience of the first quarter of the year throws a light upon our circumstances which did not exist at the commencement of the year, when the late Government prepared their estimates. We know likewise that the Customs revenue in the first quarter of the year was swollen through causes which are not likely to operate in succeeding quarters of the year. Large quantities of goods were poured into the country consequent upon orders which were sent to England when the colony was enjoying prosperity; and the result has been this, as every person at all acquainted with mercantile matters must be aware: that there is in the colony now an accumulation of goods which renders it most probable that the revenue during the succeeding quarters of the year will be less than in the first quarter, so that the Treasurer's estimate of the Customs revenue for the present year is more likely to be slightly in excess of what we shall actually receive than it is to be less. And the same may be said as regards land revenue. The Treasurer has reckoned the land revenue for the year as considerably less than the late Government did. We have here likewise the experience of the last three months to guide us, and that experience makes it pretty certain, in the absence of very great improvement, which none of us can anticipate during the next few months, that the receipts from that source of revenue will be much less than the late Government anticipated. He must be a very sanguine man indeed—he must be a man ostrich-like, who hides his head in the sand—who fails, after carefully going through the figures, to arrive at the same conclusion as that of the Treasurer, that at the end of the year there will be a deficit of £912,000 unless we meet that deficit by increasing our taxation and by retrenchment. The Treasurer himself referred to both these matters as being those which must engage the attention of the Government. He intimated, however, that at the present time he could not be expected to settle how far in that direction the Government was prepared to go. I cannot for one moment bring myself to believe that we shall, as a matter of fact, have such a large deficit; but of this I am certain: We shall find that all our efforts to increase our revenue by increased taxation, and all our efforts to diminish our expenditure by reductions, will fail to absorb this deficit, and that, at the end of the year, we shall be in the position of having to pay a large portion of the deficit out of borrowed money. I wish that for one moment I could bring myself to believe that in succeeding years we are not likely to incur deficits; but I am forced to believe that such will not be the case. It is an undoubted fact that for years past we have been relying upon our land revenue, and that the land revenue has now received a shock from which it is never likely to recover. It is not that there will not be a demand for land, but that the land for the most part has

been already parted with; that our landed estate no longer exists—the land is no longer available to the same extent as formerly. In a paper which has been recently distributed—the report of the Crown Lands Department for last year—there is a reference made to this matter, which shows the fact that finance depending upon land revenue for the future is likely to be deranged, because the land available for sale has been parted with to such an extent that we have a very small quantity left. The Secretary for Crown Lands states that, as regards the Province of Canterbury, whence the larger portion of land revenue has been received of late years, “comparatively little of the land remaining in the hands of the Crown in this district can be deemed agricultural.” Then he goes on and refers to the land in other provinces, and he makes it perfectly clear that for the future we cannot rely as we have done in the past for aid to our public works expenditure or to our own general revenue on sales of land.

The Hon. Mr. WOOD.—I should like the indulgence of the Council for a moment while I draw attention to the fact that, in referring to the Province of Canterbury as yielding a large proportion of the land revenue, the honorable member scarcely did justice to the subject. I ask indulgence in this matter because, as has been said by the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell, it is highly dangerous that damaging reports should go forth at a time like this. I would refer him to Otago—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman is clearly out of order.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I was speaking upon the spur of the moment, and was not going fully into the case; but, as my honorable friend (the Hon. Mr. Wood) referred to Otago, I will read what the Secretary of Crown Lands has to say about that province. He says, “The land now offered and remaining to offer is generally more pastoral than agricultural.” It is quite clear, therefore, that we cannot rely, as we have been in the habit of doing, upon our land revenue; and it is equally clear there was no warrant for the late Treasurer last year relying on the land revenue for receipts amounting to £1,200,000 in aid of current revenue, and something like £750,000 in aid of public works. We have been undertaking an extensive system of public works—we have constructed hundreds of miles of railway—relying upon the continuance of our land revenue. It is evident we had no right to so rely upon it. I am referring to this to show that we have been living in an atmosphere of deception. We have been shutting our eyes to the inevitable; and there is too much reason to believe that, if we continue to act as we have been acting, we shall bring ourselves to grief and the colony into contempt. We shall not only injure the prospects of the colony, but we shall carry ruin to hundreds and thousands of persons elsewhere—the persons who have been induced to lend money on the security of the colony. We have not only to consider the prosperity created by this outlay,—the benefit to ourselves personally for the time,—but we should re-

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member that there are others concerned. There is a moral responsibility connected with our actions, arising from the fact that hundreds and thousands of persons are lending their money upon the security of the colony. I refer to this only because I differ from some honorable members in this matter, and believe that the very best means of bringing about the restoration of our financial position is by not shutting our eyes to the truth of the position, but by regarding it coolly and temperately, with the determination of bringing our expenditure within our means.

The Hon. Mr. WOOD.—Sir, I wish to offer a very brief excuse for having interrupted the honorable member; but I thought it was undesirable, at a time when our circumstances do not appear very flourishing, that we should make worse of them than they really are. I must say I think the position has been painted, as was stated by a previous speaker, in the blackest possible colours, and, moreover, that the honorable gentleman who has just sat down has tried to make things appear as bad as possible. I do not know that he has done so intentionally; but, at any rate, the remarks he has made with reference to the land of New Zealand must produce a bad effect, and it is only upon that ground that I have a word to say on the present occasion. The honorable gentleman said very little land was available; but we know that there are millions of acres of good land in New Zealand, not available for sale at the present time, whether the honorable gentleman knows it or not. Why, I believe there is sufficient unsold land in the Province of Otago alone to pay off every shilling of our debt. There may be differences of opinion on that point, but some gentlemen do not know how much land there is there. I do not know the exact acreage myself, but I should say it is well on for fifteen million acres of unsold land in Otago. Some, of course, is of comparatively little value; but some of it is of very great value indeed. Therefore I do not think it is well such damaging statements as we have heard should be allowed to go forth uncontradicted, because they may do us serious injury.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—Sir, it is to be hoped that those who undertake to manage the finances of the country will have a clearer idea of the resources of the colony than the honorable gentleman who has just sat down. His statement that there are fifteen million acres of unsold land in Otago was exceedingly amusing, seeing that that is about the area of the whole province—mountain, plain, and all. I do not desire to go further into that matter, but I will add this: that when honorable gentlemen get up and complain that too gloomy a picture has been made out in reference to the state of the colony, and say such things should not be done, I desire, for one, to say, in my place in this Council, that I utterly reject all this talk about painting the finances of the colony in such black colours. I believe that the truer you make your exposition of the affairs of the colony the better it will be for the colony. Whether the deficit is £900,000 or £500,000, the best thing you can do is to tell the truth. I am quite sure you will not raise the credit of the

colony by glossing over the truth and bolstering up a false condition of things with the view of securing a little ephemeral prosperity, which will be blown away by the first breath of adversity. If you want to establish a sound credit, which shall not be liable to be swept away with the first reverse of fortune, you must tell people really how you stand, and you must not attempt to conceal anything at all, however unpleasant it may be. I, for one, take exception to the language used by those who find fault with the Treasurer for stating what he did last night. What was he put in office for, but to tell the truth? And the truth he has told, as he believed it. It is possible his figures may not be absolutely correct; but, with the greatest deference to my honorable friend the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell—who has had great experience as a politician, and for whose advice we are most grateful in this Council—I prefer to take the Treasurer's figures, and I only hope we may not find that the Treasurer, so far from exaggerating the amount of the deficiency, has under-estimated it. I think that those persons in this colony who are true settlers, and who have a real interest and a stake in the country, would do well to express their satisfaction at having a gentleman in the Government who is not afraid to fearlessly expose the real position. I, for one, am not in the least afraid of the position of the colony. I believe the colony only requires to be governed by a firm and strong Government, who will administer affairs as they ought to be administered, who will act straightforwardly without reference to consequences to themselves; and then the finances of the colony will be restored to prosperity. We know that our resources are very great indeed, and we know that we are, and have been, indulging in luxuries such as no community like this has ever before indulged in; and it is only reasonable to expect temporary difficulties, though we shall be able with proper management to tide them over. We are, for instance, giving a quarter of a million of money away every year as subsidies to Road Boards, County Councils, and similar local bodies, although some of those very local bodies have large sums lying to their credit in the banks—sums of money upon which they are absolutely drawing 5 or 6 or 7 per cent. as interest. Honorable members of this Council know that to be fact, for some of them have had connection with these transactions. Yet we talk about the financial necessities of the colony while this sort of thing is going on, and no one apparently has the courage to do that in reference to these subsidies which would be a straightforward, simple, and proper course. I hope I have said nothing offensive, but it does seem to me it requires plain talking in order to get at the proper course. We also want a strong Government, who will have the power and the courage to reduce the expenditure on public works. That is the direction in which an immense reduction must take place; and we want a Government who will take a firm stand in this matter. And, moreover, we want a Government—I do not wish to speak offensively to the Hon. Colonel Whitmore—which will sweep away that

tinkering of the Customs duties which the late Government were guilty of—a tinkering which lost to the revenue £100,000 a year without doing an atom of good to any individual in the colony. There are three things which require to be seen to, if our financial condition is to be restored. The Colonial Treasurer has done the colony no injury. He went into the Treasury to do what good he could—not with the view of doing all the injury possible, as some would have us suppose; and he has done good by telling us the simple truth, instead of making misstatements. The Treasurer bears a character which is sufficient to negative such charges; and I hold it is absurd to say any such statement was made with a view to injure the country, and it is absurd to say it will injure the country.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—I hope the honorable gentleman does not wish to convey that I said any such thing as that the Treasurer meant to injure the country?

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—Well, the honorable gentleman went very near saying that, if he did not actually say it. If there is one characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race of which I think sometimes we might have reason to be proud, it is that unsparing self-criticism which we indulge in, whether it be a time of national adversity or a time of prosperity. Look at the criticisms on our military organization during the time of the Crimean war. Was anything ever more utterly unsparing than the revelations as to our want of organization in many departments? But did those criticisms, severe and unpleasant as they were, do us any harm? We held ourselves up to public scorn during that war; and yet it has been admitted by every nation in the world that we came out of it, as compared with our allies, in the very best possible way. We introduced reforms; and our organizations, such as transport, victualing, and so forth, were much more perfect at the end of the war than at the commencement. But how was that done? Not by contending that there was nothing to be found fault with. It was done by telling the truth; and that is the manner in which we must cure the evils of our finance. If these figures of the Treasurer be true—and I believe that they are true—I hope the Government will not yield one single inch; and if they are to be turned out of office for telling the truth, at least let it be known that there are men in the colony who are prepared to state what is absolutely correct, and who will not gloss over anything whatever in the state of the public business. Perhaps I have spoken with too much warmth; but I feel that so much has been said, both last night and since, about the dreadful facts of this Statement, that it is only right that those who feel that, so far from doing any harm, it must do good, should at least give expression to that feeling. If it does affect our credit for a time, it will do good in the long run, because people will be much more willing to lend us money when they know we tell the truth with regard to our affairs. I think the Hon. Mr. Wood greatly exaggerated the value of our land. I do not know whether it is right to say so in my place in Parliament, but, really, I do not believe all the land

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available for sale would be anything like sufficient to pay off our debt. But, fortunately for us, we need not take that to heart. The creditor does not look to the land. It is well known that what he looks to is the general revenue of the colony; and if we take the proper means—no doubt we shall suffer for a time from the depression which no country in the world has escaped—but if we take proper means we shall be able to restore our revenue, because, when prosperity returns, no doubt we shall find the revenue will greatly increase. At the same time I cannot help thinking that the Treasurer could not have estimated his revenue at any higher figure than he has put it, looking to the returns of the first quarter and to the present state of affairs. With regard to the Bill, I think we may safely leave that to the Government. I am quite prepared to believe that this is the best way of providing funds for the purpose.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—I will ask the indulgence of the Council to say only one word. If there was a single expression I used which could possibly be construed, except in the mind of my honorable friend, as conveying an imputation against the Colonial Treasurer that he had made the statement with the intention of injuring the colony, I should be most sincerely sorry for using it: nothing of the kind ever entered my conception, nor could I imagine that, after the long parliamentary life I have led, I could ever be supposed capable either of feeling such a sentiment or of expressing it in my place here.

Bill read a second and a third time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 15th October, 1879.

First Readings—Personal Explanation—Middle Island Railways Department—Sydenham Post and Telegraph Offices—Cambridge-Rotorua Communication—Bluff-Winton Railway—Invercargill Municipal Sinking Fund—Taieri County Subsidies—Otago Land Fund—Five-Million Loan—Tasapaka Municipal Loan—Armed Settlers, &c.—Public Domains—Nathan and Wilkie—Mandeville and Rangiora Drainage—Local Industries—Wakatipu Gold Fields Runs—Qualification of Electors Bill—Onchunga Water Reserve Bill—Ministry.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Wanganui Endowed School Bill, Lyttelton Harbour Board and Corporation Exchange Bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. TOMOANA.—I wish to make a personal explanation. There are two particular mistakes regarding what I said the other day. I did not say that Mr. Hall had agreed to put a stop to the purchase of Native lands, and to abolish the Native Land Court. I clearly remember what I said. Those were not Mr. Hall's words to me.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I may say, Sir, that I intend to-morrow to move that the whole matter be referred to the Reporting Debates Committee; and that will be the proper time to enter into the question. I shall bring the matter forward as one of privilege affecting the records of the House.

Mr. McLEAN.—I would like to call attention to the fact that an inquiry into the *Hansard* reports will do no good, because I presume the *Hansard* reporter takes down what the interpreter says; but what is disputed is the interpretation, and the production of the reporter's notes—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman had better reserve this point until the motion comes on to-morrow.

MIDDLE ISLAND RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether any instructions have been given for the removal from Christchurch to Dunedin of the departments of the Commissioner, the Accountant, and the Cashier, Middle Island Railways, or any one of those departments; and, if so, what is the date of those instructions?

Mr. OLIVER replied that no instructions whatever had been issued for the removal of any branch of these departments to Dunedin. Some correspondence relative to the subject had been laid on the table.

SYDENHAM POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICES.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Postmaster-General, Whether the Government will take steps to erect a post office and telegraph station in the Borough of Sydenham with the least possible delay?

Mr. HALL said it was the intention of the Government to open a post office and telegraph station in the Borough of Sydenham. Inquiries were now being made for a site, and as soon as satisfactory arrangements could be made the buildings would be proceeded with.

CAMBRIDGE-ROTORUA COMMUNICATION.

Mr. MOSS asked the Minister for Public Works, What steps are being taken, or proposed to be taken, to open up communication between Cambridge and Lake Rotorua by way of Tapapa?

Mr. OLIVER, in reply, said that no work had been executed on this road yet, because no vote had been taken for the purpose. It had been proposed to expend £1,200 on the construction of bridges, and, if the road was to be of any service, a further expenditure of £2,000 would apparently be necessary; but nothing had been done yet, and the matter would be fully considered before the estimates were submitted.

BLUFF-WINTON RAILWAY.

Mr. BAIN asked the Minister for Public Works, If he intends to place a sum of money on the estimates for the purpose of fencing the railway line from Bluff Harbour to Winton?

Mr. OLIVER replied that the Commissioner of Railways for the Middle Island had only pro-

vided in the estimates for the fencing-in of such portions of this line of railway as were necessary, having regard to the safety of passengers and traffic. The question of fencing in the whole of the railways was engaging the attention of the department; but it was a matter which would involve very considerable expenditure, and therefore required serious consideration.

INVERCARGILL MUNICIPAL SINKING FUND.

Mr. BAIN asked the Government, If they will lay before this House all correspondence in reference to the recent appointment of trustees of the Invercargill Municipal Sinking Fund?

Mr. HALL said the Government would have no objection to lay this correspondence on the table. It included an anonymous communication to the Government. He did not know whether the honorable gentleman wished that to be produced.

Mr. BAIN said he asked for all correspondence.

TAIERI COUNTY SUBSIDIES.

Mr. FULTON asked the Colonial Treasurer, How soon the subsidies now due to the various local bodies in the Taieri County will be paid?

Major ATKINSON said the whole of the subsidies due to the various local bodies throughout the colony would be paid immediately after he had obtained funds under the Bill which passed through the House on the previous day.

OTAGO LAND FUND.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, If they are disposed to pay to the local government bodies in the Provincial District of Otago the £54,000 of Land Fund impounded by the late Government, and which the Public Accounts Committee reported belonged to the Provincial District of Otago?

Major ATKINSON said, as far as he knew, this sum was in the same position as the £100,000 which was held by the Government, and which a Committee had reported ought to be repaid. Both of these sums, he understood, were chargeable to loan, and the repayment of them would have to depend on the raising of the loan. They would, of course, appear in the public works estimates.

FIVE-MILLION LOAN.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, If they have received any information regarding the negotiation of the £5,000,000 loan; and if there would be any objection to lay such information before this House? After the Statement made on the previous evening, it was perhaps not necessary to ask this question, unless in the meantime further information had been received by the Government in reference to raising the five-million loan.

Mr. HALL said the Government had received a telegram on this subject on the previous evening, during the delivery of the Financial Statement by the Colonial Treasurer. The loan had not yet been placed, and the Government did not think it desirable that the telegram should be produced at present.

TUAPEKA MUNICIPAL LOAN.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, If it is true, as stated in the public Press, that £5,000 has been lent to the Municipality of Tuapeka; and, if so, on what terms, and by what authority?

Mr. OLIVER replied that last year a loan of £50,000 was authorized on behalf of those localities in Otago which suffered from the floods that then prevailed. Out of that £50,000, two sums, of £5,000 and £3,000 respectively, had been advanced to the Tuapeka County Council. The loans had been made repayable by equal instalments, extending over five years, without interest.

Mr. J. C. BROWN would remark that the Government had misconceived the facts in this case. The debt was not that of the County Council, but of the Municipality.

Mr. MURRAY said he understood this matter referred to the Municipality of Lawrence or Tuapeka. The statement was, that the money had been lent for a term of years to the Municipality, at 6 per cent. per annum.

Major ATKINSON said it was true that there had been certain negotiations between the public departments and the Municipality of Lawrence, but the negotiations apparently came to nothing, the department not deeming the security sufficient.

ARMED SETTLERS, ETC.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, How many settlers, Volunteers, and Constabulary are under arms at the present time in New Zealand, and at what weekly cost?

Mr. HALL said that, so far as the Government were aware, there were no Volunteers actually on duty at the present time. There were certain Volunteers stated to be on duty at the Thames, but there was no record in the offices of the terms upon which that duty was being performed.

PUBLIC DOMAINS.

Mr. TOLE asked the Government, If they will lay before this House a return showing the amounts paid to the various bodies having control of reserves under the Public Domains Acts, for the year ending the 30th June last?

Mr. HALL said the Government would lay the return on the table at the earliest possible date.

NATHAN AND WILKIE.

Major WILLIS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether a sum of money was not, several months ago, paid to the trustee in bankruptcy, at Wanganui, of the estate of Nathan and Wilkie, railway contractors under the Government, for the purpose of paying the wages due to some of the men employed by them on such contract, who had, prior to the time of such payment to the trustee, duly proved their debts; and why the said money has not hitherto been paid to the men? Also, whether interest has been received or accrued by or to the said trustee in the interval?

Mr. HALL said that, Nathan and Wilkie having become insolvent, the works were carried on by the Government. A sum of £1,075 due to them was paid by the Government to the trustee in

Mr. Hall

bankruptcy, on the condition that he should give due notice to all the workmen that the money had been paid. The Government were not aware whether anything further had been done in the matter, but he would be glad to show the honorable gentleman all the correspondence on the subject.

MANDEVILLE AND RANGIORA DRAINAGE.

Mr. BOWEN asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government will appoint a Royal Commission to take evidence and report as to the drainage system of the Mandeville and Rangiora District? A great deal of money had been spent on the drainage of the district, and opinions differed very much as to the manner in which it had been laid out. The fact was, that a new river-bed had been formed, with a great deal of water in it, and some of the farmers in the district considered that they had been injured by the manner in which the drainage works had been carried out. The matter was one of importance to the settlers, and also to the Government, as the railway ran through the district. It was desirable that an inquiry should be held, and the people hoped it would be thorough. He did not ask for a mere departmental inquiry, as it was necessary that evidence should be taken on the spot as to the original watershed, and the best line for the permanent outlet. It would be advisable that an engineer from the Public Works Department should be associated with some independent engineer familiar with drainage works, and that they should take evidence upon the matter.

Mr. ROLLESTON was aware this was a vexed question, and that Government property was seriously affected by the drainage works. He was also aware that the action of the Government in the past with reference to these works had been very much called into question, and the Government were of opinion that an inquiry should be instituted. The particular nature of the inquiry was a matter for future consideration. He should be glad to confer with the honorable gentleman, and the Government would take steps to have an inquiry made. Whether it would be by Royal Commission or otherwise he was not now prepared to say.

LOCAL INDUSTRIES.

Mr. LEVIN asked the Government, Whether they will appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the best means of promoting and encouraging manufactures and local industries in the colony?

Mr. HALL said the subject was one of the greatest importance; and, without committing themselves to any opinion as to what was the best manner of assisting local industries, the Government concurred with the honorable gentleman in thinking it desirable that a Committee of the House should investigate the subject. If the honorable gentleman would be good enough to confer with the Government as to the appointment of the Committee and the selection of members to compose it, they would be very happy to meet him.

WAKATIPU GOLD FIELDS RUNS.

Mr. FINN asked the Government, If they have released the late licensees of the Wakatipu Gold Fields Runs from the payment of rents due prior to the cancellation of licenses?

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Government had not released any of the late licensees from the payment of rents due prior to the cancellation of the licenses. No reason had been shown, so far as he was aware, for releasing them. The leases were given upon condition that no rent should be paid from the date of surrender. That was all the information the Government had at present, and upon that information they saw no reason to alter their decision. They would be happy to hear from the honorable gentleman whether there was any reason why the rent should be remitted.

Mr. FINN said he asked the question because he wished to know the position of the licensees, as several of them were very heavy sufferers by the late floods; and he understood a petition was about being presented to the House by one of them, asking for relief.

QUALIFICATION OF ELECTORS BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Sir, I shall take up the time of the House very briefly in concluding the speech I was making when the debate was adjourned yesterday. To put the position plainly to the House, it is this: We, on our side, contend that the honorable gentlemen who ask for leave to bring in this Bill do not possess the confidence of the House. We say that they are in a minority at the present time—a minority greater than the minority they were in when the division was taken on Friday evening; and that, in point of fact, instead of having acquired strength, they have lost strength. I go further, and say that by no possibility can it be proper that a measure of this kind should be brought in by a Government which does not possess a majority. The principle of parliamentary government is, that the Government of the day should command a majority in the House. We may be told that on a previous occasion there existed a Government which did not possess the confidence of a majority of members of this House; but, so far as the votes went, they did. The very same tactics which we pursued then are being pursued towards us now. I do not object to "being hoist with our own petard," but we propose to show the country plainly and unmistakably that the Government does not possess the confidence of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must point out to the honorable gentleman that he is opening up the whole question of a want of confidence.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Then I will limit myself to the question before us. I say that the proposal to bring in this measure comes from a Government which does not possess the confidence of the House. This measure originated with the late Government, and with their party. It is really and truly the measure of the Liberal party.

Mr. HALL.—Our party.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Of the Liberal party to which the honorable gentleman does not belong. He may at the present time be wearing the

Liberal clothing, which is merely stolen from his predecessors in office. I say, further, that if it had not been for the fact that we put that measure before the country the honorable gentleman would never have thought of bringing it in; but, as the country has approved of it, and as many honorable members on his own side will have it, he is wise enough in his generation in bringing it in. As I said yesterday, I do not believe in unfair tactics. I gave the honorable gentlemen an opportunity yesterday to make their Statement on finance, and I expected that last evening we should have had a chance to take a division on this motion; but that was not possible. You, Sir, ruled that no new business could be taken after half-past twelve; but it seems to me that I might justly complain that the honorable gentleman did not come to me and arrange to give me an opportunity to bring this question on before the House adjourned. The motion I intend now to move is what is called the previous question; but I wish, before making that motion, to ask you to rule on one or two points. First of all, I wish to know whether this motion is one which, if carried, would prevent this Bill being brought in again this session.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the previous question were carried, That the question be not put to-day, it would be quite competent to bring it on on a future day.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The second point is this: I have been about nine years in this House, and there are gentlemen here who were in it nine years before me. I have often seen the previous question put when many honorable members have been uncertain which way to vote upon it. I understand the form of putting the question is, "That this question be now put;" and that I, as mover, and those who think with me, are entitled to negative that question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is so.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—That being so, I will not take up the time of the House further, but move now, That the question be now put. I have to explain distinctly that the reason why I make this motion is in order that the strength of parties may be tested, and because the leader of the Government did not choose to give precedence to the motion of want of confidence which has been tabled.

Mr. HALL.—May I ask, Sir, as a point of order, whether, when that question is disposed of, I shall be entitled, as mover of the main motion, to speak again in reply, if I speak now to the amendment?

Mr. SPEAKER.—You will not be able to do so.

Major ATKINSON.—With all deference to you, Sir, I understood that, when an amendment was disposed of, an honorable member was in exactly the same position as he was before it was put—that is to say, that my honorable friend could speak now, and then in reply on the main question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the honorable member speaks to the amendment, he has forfeited his right to reply.

Major ATKINSON.—I submit that any honor-

able member speaking to the original question can speak again to an amendment, and, when that is disposed of, if he is the mover of the main question, he can sum up in reply.

Mr. SPEAKER.—That would give the honorable gentleman an opportunity of making three speeches.

Major ATKINSON.—That may be, Sir; but I submit that it has been our practice.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman is mistaken. The Speakers of this House have always ruled that, if an honorable member moves a motion, and then speaks to an amendment to that motion, he forfeits his right of reply.

Mr. HALL.—Perhaps, by the indulgence of the House, I may be allowed to make a statement explanatory of the position which the Government have taken up in this matter. I think it would be convenient that, before the debate goes further, I should, in a few words, explain the position. In order to do so, I shall have to read a letter written to me by the honorable member for Port Chalmers, and my reply. I presume the honorable gentleman will not object, as the letters may be considered public property. I will avoid argument, and will merely state facts to the House. The position we have taken up is that, before the House entertains or decides the question of no-confidence, we should have a reasonable opportunity of bringing before it our policy. The earliest possible period at which my honorable colleague the Native Minister can make his Statement is Friday evening. Having said so much, I will read the letter I received from the honorable gentleman who is said to be the leader of the Opposition—although this seems doubtful, because one receives proposals from so many honorable gentlemen opposite that it is difficult to say who is their leader. However, for this purpose I suppose he must be looked upon as the leader. The letter is as follows:—

“13th October, 1879.

“DEAR SIR,—Will you be good enough to inform me whether it is the intention of the Government to place my motion of want of confidence on the Order Paper so that it may come on for discussion to-morrow (Tuesday), in accordance with the will of the House, as expressed by its vote on Friday last?—Yours faithfully,

“J. MACANDREW.

“The Hon. John Hall, &c.”

To that I sent the following reply:—

“Government Buildings,

“Wellington, 13th October, 1879.

“DEAR SIR,—My colleagues and myself consider it would be unconstitutional for the House to entertain a motion of no-confidence in a Government until it has had a reasonable opportunity of placing its policy before the country. We cannot, therefore, agree to your suggestion to take your notice to-morrow.

“If you are willing to allow us a reasonable time for the above purpose, we shall then be ready to take your motion as the first Order on some day to be agreed upon. I trust you will consider this to be a reasonable compromise.—Yours faithfully,

“J. Macandrew, Esq., M.H.R., &c.”

Major Atkinson

I have received no reply to that letter, and, in consequence, a member of the Government has spoken with the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan), who has given us to understand that he has communicated to the members of his party the proposition which we have made—namely, that, if the Opposition will allow us the present week to bring forward our measures, it being understood that the Native Minister will make his Statement on Friday, we shall agree that on Tuesday the motion of want of confidence of the honorable member for Port Chalmers shall be taken as the first Order of the day. We do not ask the House in any way to indorse our measures of policy: we merely ask that our Bills may be advanced so as to be before the House and the country. I submit to honorable members of independent and moderate views on the opposite side of the House, that this is a reasonable proposal. I do not want now to argue the question, but I think honorable members must see that the position which the Government have taken up is only reasonable. That is the proposal the Government have made, but we have not received any reply.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Could not the honorable gentleman arrange to take the want-of-confidence motion on Friday? It means another week's loss of time if we put it off till Tuesday. I think it would be a fair compromise to take the motion on Friday, and I am ready to agree to that.

Mr. HALL.—We would do so, if it were possible; but we have to carry on the ordinary work of the Government, and that occupies us from ten o'clock in the morning to two o'clock next morning, day after day. It is therefore impossible for my honorable colleague to make his Statement at an earlier period than on Friday night.

Mr. McLEAN.—I should also like to point out to the honorable gentleman, when he asks the House to take his motion on Friday, that we have to proceed to consider the election petitions at three o'clock on that afternoon, and that will break into the day. The proposal made by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government is so very reasonable that I am perfectly sure all the independent members of the House will agree to it, and will not submit to be led by those who, I must say, show such indecent haste in trying to force this want-of-confidence motion before the House. I do not at all see that, even if they manage to do so, they will find themselves in the position in which they expect to be; and, when they do get it on, they will very probably be sorry that they did so. They have been getting, as they think, recruits from this side of the House, and certainly we know of two. With regard to one of them we have expressed no surprise, because we know it is an ordinary thing for him to turn political somersaults; but, with regard to another—

Mr. HISLOP.—I rise to a point of order, Sir. Is it competent to the honorable member to anticipate the debate on the no-confidence motion?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I was not for the moment paying particular attention to what the honor-

able member was saying; but I think it would not be advisable to anticipate the debate that may arise on a motion which has not yet come before the House.

Mr. MURRAY.—Speaking to the point of order, I think the honorable member who has just raised this objection has gone much further in anticipating the debate on the no-confidence motion and departing from the subject before the House than the honorable member for Waikouaiti.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Waikouaiti was speaking on the Bill which was before the House last night, not on this question.

Mr. HISLOP.—I have not spoken on this question.

Mr. McLEAN.—I was proceeding to show that, although they had got one or two members over to their side, there are honorable gentlemen on that side who are perfectly free to act as they think fit—in point of fact, to go to whichever side of the House they please. I very much misjudge those honorable gentlemen if they allow themselves to be led away by those who seek, with indecent haste, to get upon the Government benches again, and to whom I say it is life or death to get on those benches again as speedily as possible. However, I do not wish to keep up this debate now, as there is a motion of the honorable member for Clive on the Order Paper which I should like to see brought on. I will therefore take another opportunity at an early period this session to review the conduct of those honorable gentlemen.

Mr. MOSS.—I should like to ask the Premier if he does not think that the Statement of the Native Minister might be made during the debate on the no-confidence motion, so saving time. It seems to me to be the desire of both sides of the House to bring matters to an issue as soon as possible, and get through the important business which we have before us. Why, then, might not the Native Minister make his Statement during the debate? I feel perfectly sure that, if the Colonial Treasurer had taken that course, instead of making his Statement last night, it would have had quite as much effect, and we should have avoided some hours of discussion on that Statement. I throw this suggestion out to the Premier, who must be as anxious to expedite business as we are on this side of the House.

Mr. SEDDON.—As one of the independent members alluded to by the honorable member for Waikouaiti, I should like to express my opinion with regard to the delay that has taken place in getting on with the business. I am simply disgusted, when I come here to work and do what good I can for the country, to find that we are kept from day to day talking and talking, and doing no work—to find that, although we have been now three weeks here, we are still in just the same position that we were in when we first met. There has not been a single day's work done, and now we are asked to waste another week. The Government know full well that all they are doing now is waste of time. Although they are interviewed day by day, and urged to

get on, and although they keep on tinkering with measures that do not belong to them, they know quite well that they have not got a majority to support them. Let them face the position at once. It would be a much more business-like way to have this want-of-confidence motion brought forward at once, and then let us go to the real business we have to do. I may say that I, as an independent member, am not going to give party votes time after time, and neglect my duty as a private member; because such a course of action would be injurious to the country. Why do not those honorable gentlemen at the head of the Government listen to the voice of the majority? The honorable member for Waikouaiti speaks of its being a matter of life or death to honorable gentlemen from this side to get on those benches again, and says that when they were in the Government they clung closely to those benches; but there is no record before the House that they refused to accept a no-confidence vote at the beginning of a session, or that, when they found themselves in a minority, they did not at once resign. That being the case, I suggest that we go on with private business. On Friday we shall have the Statement from the Native Minister; and on Tuesday next let us have the no-confidence vote. During that time, the Committee asked for by the honorable member for Clive will be sitting. While waiting for these things, this debate will be prolonged, so that I look forward to next week being lost before the no-confidence vote is brought to a conclusion. After that, if the party on our side are successful, they will want a few days to repair the damage done by the gentlemen now occupying the Government benches; so that you may say there will be a fortnight lost. Having these facts before us, I say it is incumbent upon all members of the House like myself to take up this position: Seeing that it is a waste of time to attempt to go on with the business of the Government at the present time, we had better stop all business and bring the matter to an issue. That is the position I take up as an independent member in this House, and I trust other independent members will take the same step.

Mr. PITT.—As one of the new members of the House, I think I may be acquitted of having taken up much time in the House during recent discussions. But I do not admit that these discussions have been profitless. We have achieved one event since this House met which I do not think has been dearly purchased, even if it had taken up the whole time which has elapsed since the House met. I mean the displacement of the late Government. That is an event in the history of this colony which I, for one, rejoice at, and I do not think the time has been wasted which has been occupied in achieving it. But I hope that no more time will be wasted in reference to these measures, and I would appeal to the young members who like myself were returned to this House pledged to carry out what have been styled those "liberal" measures, to go on with them, to protest against this waste of time, and to protest against their being imperilled by any further postponement. These measures we have been returned here pledged to our constituents to pass,

and we believe the country is anxious to have them; and I appeal to honorable members to rise above all party considerations, and unite, as I think we may all unite, on common ground to pass these measures as speedily as possible. Party ties are all very well, but consideration for the interests of the country should, I think, be paramount; and I think these are times when those party ties should not be held to be binding—at all events, not binding to this extent, that they are to be mere instruments of what can be styled nothing more or less than factious opposition to the prosecution of the work of the country. It seems to me it is only a question of who is to have the credit of passing the measures to which I refer. The present Opposition seems to be jealous of the Government taking the carriage of these Bills through the House. If the patriotic spirit referred to by the honorable member for Auckland City East exists in this House, I ask honorable members possessing it to unite and have them passed as speedily as possible. We have had a warning in reference to the Triennial Parliaments Bill. On Friday evening last we had an opportunity of passing it, and, if honorable members had taken the course I now ask them to take, that Bill would have gone through this House, and by this time would have reached the other branch of the Legislature. I would ask, Where is that Bill now? If honorable members refer to the Order Paper they will see that, in addition to being behind all those fifty-one notices of motion, it is down to No. 21 among the Orders of the day. Goodness knows when we shall come to it again. The question whether or not the present Government have the confidence of the House does not seem to me to be wrapped up in these measures. We were returned to pass them; and our duty to our constituents and the country, if we are sincere and in earnest, is to have them put on the Statute Book as speedily as possible. For these reasons, I hope honorable members will not interfere further to prevent the passage of these measures through this House, and then we can all unite to have them passed as speedily as possible.

Mr. MURRAY.—I do not wish to address myself to the proposal now before the House so much as to make a few remarks on what I consider is the unfortunate position taken up by the gentlemen who formed the late Ministry. We have met here as representatives of the people, to do the work of the country, and I would ask them to do it, instead of offering factious opposition. There is no necessity for any delay in the business. There is any amount of private business on the Order Paper, which is of quite as much importance to the country as what is called Government business. This is a private members' day, and I submit that both sides of the House should agree to accord to private members two days a week for their business. Then let the Statement on Native Affairs be taken on Friday, as suggested by the Premier. It would save a great deal of unkind feeling if honorable members would accept with a good grace what is inevitable, and agree that the debate shall take place on

Mr. Pitt

Tuesday. I think the honorable member at the head of the Government stated the position very fairly, and I am sorry his advances were not met in the same spirit in which they were made. I trust that those gentlemen who, like myself, are impartial and independent, and determined to do what is right, will not sacrifice principle to personal and party considerations, but will see fair-play and justice given to both sides.

Mr. KELLY.—It appears to me that a reasonable proposition was made by the Government, when they proposed to take the motion of want of confidence on Tuesday. The other side want Friday, so that there is no very great difference between the two parties. I think the matter might be settled by adjourning until half-past seven this evening, and the question considered of bringing on the motion on Monday at half-past seven; and I would therefore suggest that the debate be adjourned until that time, to enable the leaders on both sides to meet and confer, so that the melancholy spectacle now presented to the country of blocked business be put an end to.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I am astonished that we have had no communication from the leader of the Opposition with reference to the remarks made by the Hon. the Premier and by the honorable member for New Plymouth. I do not think the House has quite considered what would be the effect of "the previous question," if carried. It simply amounts to this: that we should go on then to the next notice—leave to bring in a Bill—and the same decision would be repeated upon that Bill, and so on upon all the other Bills, the consequence being that the whole of to-day would be entirely wasted. The whole of to-morrow will also be wasted. That is entirely carrying out the intention of the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan), who declared that he would obstruct all the Bills, one by one, in order to prevent any business being done before the want-of-confidence motion is considered. The consequence of that clearly will be that the whole of this week will be absolutely wasted, without any business being done. If honorable gentlemen on the other side of the House would accept the exceedingly reasonable proposition made by the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, to take Tuesday next for the want-of-confidence motion, in the meantime permitting the Government to bring forward their measures, and the Native Minister to make his Statement, we could get through all the private business at present on the Order Paper probably in the course of to-day and to-morrow, and also advance those Liberal measures a certain stage, so as to keep them in the first rank of the business on the Paper. Whatever Government is in office will have to bring forward those measures, and it would therefore be an advantage, in any event, to have them advanced a stage. I cannot understand why honorable gentlemen opposite should be so determined to absolutely block the way of business. I look upon the matter from a perfectly impartial point of view, and I fail to see the object of the obstinate obstruction of business which honorable gentlemen are displaying. For my part, I am as grieved as any member of the

House at the waste of time which is going on, but, at the same time, I am bound to say that it arises entirely from this obstinate obstruction of business. The honorable gentlemen could gain their object quite as well, and at the same time afford an opportunity to do a great deal of business. I have business on the Order Paper, and every other member has something he wishes to get passed; but the moment any Government business comes up the honorable member for the Thames raises a motion which puts a stop to anything being done. I say that that is not right, and the House might just as well accept the proposal of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government. When a Minister makes a statement such as that made by the Premier to the House, he is entitled to some answer from the other side; but the honorable gentleman leading the Opposition gave no answer whatever. When the honorable gentleman made his proposal they remained silent and allowed the question to be put. I do not see why there should be any objection to the postponement of the no-confidence motion until Tuesday. There would be no loss of time. It would expedite matters if the Opposition were to accede at once to the proposal of the Government. I presume the honorable gentlemen do not wish to debar the Native Minister from making his Statement on Native Affairs. I do not believe the debate on the no-confidence motion will be a long one. It would be desirable that the debate should be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible, in order that we may see how we are going to get out of the trouble we are in. Do honorable gentlemen opposite say that, should the want-of-confidence motion be carried, business will then go on smoothly, and that no disputes will occur? Why, there will be a perfect pandemonium in this House, and I look forward to as extraordinary a state of affairs as ever was witnessed in this House. On Tuesday the Government will be prepared to take a vote on the want-of-confidence motion, and will either retire or remain in office as they may determine. In the interest of every member of the House, and in the interest of the whole country, I do trust honorable members will withdraw this dogged obstruction, take the debate on the want-of-confidence motion next week, and allow private members a chance of getting on with their measures. In a similar state of affairs in the session of 1877 the honorable member for the Thames, from his seat on the Government benches, begged honorable members not to obstruct the progress of private business. He said, "Let private business go on, and take the want-of-confidence motion afterwards." That request was well received by the House. I do hope that the leaders of the Opposition will recollect that they themselves have been placed in a similar position, and that they will accede to the proposal of the Premier to take the want-of-confidence motion on Tuesday. In the meantime we can clear the Order Paper of the private business.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—For the same reason given by the honorable member for Geraldine why the House should take one course, I think that

exactly the opposite ought to be adopted. In the interest of members of this House, and in the interest of the country, the sooner this question is settled the better. The honorable member tells us that he tried to look at this matter as impartially as he could, and, having done so, he has arrived at a certain conclusion. I believe he has done so with the best intention, but in this case he had formed a foregone conclusion in his mind, and, however much he tried to disturb that conclusion, he found it impossible to do so. He thinks that the business of the country is being impeded because of the motion just made. I think honorable members on this side of the House claim at least as great a desire to facilitate the business of the country as the honorable gentleman. We recognize that in the present position of affairs the question of want of confidence should be disposed of at once by a prompt and distinct vote. Nothing else will settle the question but a prompt and distinct vote. The honorable gentleman thinks that the proposal of "the previous question," if carried, will block all private business. I apprehend that the suggestion of the honorable member for Bruce is the correct one. Let the motion be passed, and immediately take up private business. Let Government business go by for the present. Let the first division apply to the other proposals of the Government. However much honorable members may desire to get on with the business, it cannot be attended to so long as this motion of want of confidence is left undisposed-of. I think honorable members on both sides of the House recognize that. We should recognize this, also: that, whether the Native Minister will have had an opportunity of bringing forward his Statement or not, he will have an opportunity of bringing forward whatever he pleases as a private member of the House. I am not in a position to say how the vote of want of confidence will go, nor, personally, do I care much; but I say that the matter should be disposed of at once, and that we should proceed to business. It ought to be distinctly understood that, in voting for "the previous question," we do not destroy any of the Bills that appear on the Order Paper, or of which notice has been given, nor, indeed, impede them. Honorable gentlemen seem to think that, because certain proposals have been put in writing and not acceded to, further correspondence ought to take place on the matter, and that then it could be settled on the floor of the House in two or three moments. If the Ministry feel that the proposal of the honorable member for Port Chalmers is worthy of consideration, why should they not at once agree to a compromise to have the matter settled on Friday? In such case, we could go on with the private business at once. The honorable member for Geraldine tells us that, if this motion of no-confidence is carried against the Government, and they are turned out of office, a perfect pandemonium will ensue. I trust that is not meant as a threat as to the course of conduct that will be pursued by that honorable gentleman in this House should the motion be carried. If it should be the intention of the honorable gentleman to indulge in any antics tending towards a

pandemonium, I hope he will remember that there is a Speaker in the chair who will protect the dignity of this House. I will only repeat that, in voting for the previous question moved by the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan), we are really bringing the business of the country to a focus; we are bringing the matter up to a distinct point, where it must be settled. Until that point has been reached and that matter has been settled it is utterly impossible that we can get on with the business of the country. I do trust the motion will be passed without any further delay.

Mr. READER WOOD. — I take the same extremely impartial view of the question that most honorable members are taking. I really think the Government should not throw any obstacles in the way of acceding to the request made. They told us that they wanted an opportunity to place their policy before the House and the country. They have had that opportunity, and they have taken the opportunity. Here are their Bills, not only on the Order Paper, but most of them are in print. And to show my extreme impartiality, I will simply say that, as regards the first Bill—the Electoral Bill—I think it is far superior in every possible way to the Bill which was placed on the table of the House by the late Government the session before last. That Bill was full of all sorts of fanciful provisions, which no one could understand: it was impossible to see how the measure could operate. On the contrary, the Bill which the honorable gentleman has placed before the House is clear and simple, and recognizes the principle that every man who is called upon to obey the law and to pay the taxes has a right to a voice in the election of those who make the laws and impose the taxes. They have put that policy of theirs before the House and the country. What more do they want? Do they want it carried? What could they wish for, more than to have their Bills put before the House and the country? After all, their Bills are simply the Bills of the late Government. They may be somewhat modified in detail, and under the present circumstances those Bills would have had to be modified by the late Government. They simply say that they are ready to adopt the policy of the late Government as the Liberal policy. With regard to finance, it was said that was most important. We did everything we possibly could to facilitate the honorable member in bringing forward the Statement he proposed to make last night. The honorable gentleman says that they want to place their policy before the House. There was no policy placed before the House last night by the Colonial Treasurer. He told us that he was simply making a Financial Statement. It was a Statement that could have been made in five minutes, and would have answered just as well in the want-of-confidence debate as in the more formal manner in which he brought it forward. There is no doubt whatever about one thing, that, unless the Government has the support of a majority in this House, it is quite impracticable that business of any sort can be carried on. Honorable members fancy that private business can go on after this

Mr. Speight

question has been settled. There is scarcely a private Bill on the Order Paper that does not affect our policy and our finance in some way or other, and the House will demand that the Government shall lead it in considering those measures. How can the House be led by a Government that has not the confidence of the House? It is not the slightest use. You may advance these measures a stage or two, in the course of a week or ten days there may be a Government on those benches holding entirely different views, and what you have done may have to be done over again. Honorable gentlemen may say, Let the House proceed with the first Order of the day, the Auckland Harbour Foreshore Sale Bill. Well, that is a measure involving a question of policy, and it is impossible to say what course the Government might think it advisable to take in regard to it. They would have to look into what had been done before, and into the possible operation of the Bill. We should like the Government to guide the House as to the course it should take in the matter. Unless the House has confidence in the Government, and knows that the Government is likely to be a stable Government, there is not the slightest use in going on with the business. Then, with regard to the notices of motion now on the Order Paper, it is possible that the House might consider one or two of these motions. But here is Motion No. 3: "Major Te Wheoro to move, That Crown grants be issued for those lands which have been returned to the Maoris by the Government." There you have got the whole Native policy of the Government opened up at once. What is the use of discussing such a question as that, when you may see another Native Minister occupying those benches in a week or two? The only point that appears to me to be left is the Statement of the Native Minister, which is to be made some time or other. I really do not see much use in an exposition of the Native policy of the Government. What does it amount to? I really do not know. Probably the main feature will be a financial one. Well, we had that a few days ago, from the honorable member for the Thames, who told us precisely what the Colonial Treasurer told us yesterday, that the vote had been very considerably exceeded. I do not think there is anything more to be said about that. But, if the Native Minister is going into all sorts of questions of peace or war, what is the use of doing so, unless the Government first of all assert their position in this House? When they have done that, and secured a majority, then we can listen not only with pleasure, as we always do, to the Native Minister, but with a knowledge that we are actually doing business. But, as it is now, we shall simply listen, and, no doubt, be very charmed by what he says; we shall hear his views,—but who cares about his views, unless we know that they are supported by a majority of this House, and will become the practical policy of the country? I do not see that we can go on with any real business until this question is actually settled.

Colonel TRIMBLE. — I will not detain the House very long, but perhaps I may be allowed

to say a few words on this question. I am going to follow the example of my friends opposite, and intend to offer a little advice. That has been the course all round; the honorable gentlemen opposite are so exceedingly fraternal in their feeling towards the Government that they cannot refrain from giving their advice. Now, my advice will come from their own side, and it is that, whether the debate on the want-of-confidence motion comes on on Tuesday next, or Tuesday week, or Tuesday fortnight, they will make it a point to place their measures as a record on the table of the House. It is nonsense to tell us that, by having them on the Order Paper, or by having them even in print in an unofficial way, they are brought in any sense before the House or the country; and I trust my honorable friends on the Government benches will resist in every possible way any attempt to prevent them from putting these measures in an official form before the House. With regard to the tactics adopted by the Opposition, I say advisedly that during the last hundred years they are entirely unprecedented. I say that very deliberately, and after having looked into the matter with some degree of care. In the Home-country, which, after all, is the precedent we are bound to follow, it has been invariably the case that, even when a Ministry has resigned—having still a small majority in the House of Commons—it has given its opponents ample time to mature their measures and to lay them before the country. And on one memorable occasion—I think, in the year 1866—when Lord Derby came into power, he had only one-third of the House of Commons in his favour and two-thirds opposed to him. Although the Queen had recommended the then Ministers not to resign, the Conservative Government were installed in power. They remained in office until it suited their own convenience to have a dissolution—in the autumn of 1868,—and, except towards the end of the term, at no time during their term of office were they disturbed by factious opposition or by any adverse motion. Gentlemen in this House who call themselves Liberals might, I think, take a lesson from that. The majority of the House of Commons on that occasion were Liberals; the majority of the House had set their minds upon great liberal measures; and yet they allowed their opponents to go on with the business of the country undisturbed. The Government now in office here do not ask to be left in power. They ask to be judged by their measures; and I think this House will not be true to its trust if it does not give them time to develop those measures and lay them fairly and fully before the country; and more particularly on this ground: that our opponents come into this House pretending to be Liberals. We on this side of the House accuse them of being—to use an expression which, of course, I do not mean in any sense offensively—wolves in sheep's clothing. We say that they are not Liberals at all. We say that they must be judged by their measures, which hitherto have not been framed in the true spirit of Liberalism, and that the measures which our friends on this side of the House are introducing, judged by the

true principles of Liberalism, will meet the requirements of the country, and be satisfactory to those who send us here. I say that, under the circumstances, such a reasonable proposition as that offered to the leader of the Opposition ought to be accepted at once; and, if it be not accepted, I would recommend the Ministry to use every form of the House, until those forms are all exhausted, to remain in their places until they have developed their policy. And I would recommend them to take their time. The interval between this and Tuesday is a very short time indeed considering the business before them, and if it should prove too short I should throw the blame upon the obstructionists.

MR. SUTTON.—It seems to me that the leaders of the Opposition are very liberal indeed, so long as they hold seats on the Government benches and have an opportunity of talking Liberalism to the country. But immediately those honorable gentlemen are removed from the Government benches their Liberalism deserts them. I am one of those who think it is absolutely necessary that we should pass these liberal measures and place them upon the Statute Book as soon as possible. I care not one straw whether the party to which I have the honor to belong should have the credit of introducing them, or whether that credit should devolve upon the leaders on the other side. I say they are important measures, and let us pass them. But I am one of those who think that the so-called liberal measures introduced by the late Government were not altogether and entirely liberal. I think that the measure which we have before us now—the Electoral Bill—is far more advanced in the way of Liberalism than any Bill which has preceded it; and I trust the House will go on with these measures, and will, at all events, read them a second time, to give the Government sufficient time to bring down their policy and explain what they intend to do. It seems to me that the opposition which we are meeting with on the present occasion is very uncalled for. I cannot shut out from my mind the impression that the motive which influences those honorable gentlemen opposite in the course they are now pursuing is a desire to regain the seats they have so deservedly lost. If they were really anxious to carry the liberal measures which they have so flaunted before the country, we should not find this factious opposition. I am not certain whether the very full and able Statement which we had last night from the Colonial Treasurer, disclosing as it did the very serious and frightful state of our finances, has not so alarmed those honorable gentlemen that they are now prepared to strain every nerve lest further exposures should take place in other departments. We have been charged during this debate by the honorable member for the Thames with having stolen the clothes of the Opposition. I remember reading in *Hansard* that in the session of 1875 a Bill to give manhood suffrage, very nearly in the same terms as those in which it is now proposed to give it, was introduced into this House by an honorable gentleman who was then, I think, a member of the Atkinson Ministry—the Hon. Mr. Reynolds.

I have no doubt a good many honorable members will hear with a considerable amount of concern and astonishment that among those who opposed that Electoral Bill becoming the permanent law of the land was the late Premier (Sir G. Grey), the honorable member for the Thames, and other honorable members who are now leading the Opposition party. If they had wanted manhood suffrage, Sir, they could have obtained it five years ago. A Bill with that object was laid on the table of this House; its second reading was moved by Mr. Reynolds, then member for Dunedin City; but it was shelved on a motion of the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) that it be read a second time that day six months. I repeat, Sir, that those gentlemen are only Liberals when it suits their own purposes. We have heard a great deal about a redistribution of seats according to population. About three years ago my honorable friend the member for Kaiapoi introduced a Bill to carry out a redistribution of seats; and what did we find on that occasion? We found that the same gentlemen who are now so rabidly in favour of such a measure were then strong in their opposition to it, and that they all voted against it. Some of the honorable gentlemen who are opposing the passage of these measures seem to be under the impression that the no-confidence motion—which, by-the-by, has got wonderfully low down on the Order Paper—when it comes on for debate, will only occupy half an hour. I think that in all probability the debate will last for four or five days—very likely two or three weeks. It will be incumbent upon those honorable gentlemen who argue against the longer retention of the present Ministry in office to show why those honorable gentlemen are not entitled to continue in their seats. It will be incumbent upon them to show that the present Government have not brought forward a policy acceptable to the country, and that they have so mismanaged the affairs of the country as to forfeit its confidence. The position is now very different from what it was a month ago. We have a Ministry scarcely seated on those benches, against whom no act of maladministration can be brought, and consisting of gentlemen of known character in the colony for many years; and I say that the country, from one end to the other, will condemn us unless we give those gentlemen time to bring in their measures, and to lay before the country the proposals which they think ought to be adopted. Whether or not the result of this debate be the exclusion from those benches of the gentlemen who now occupy them, I am certain that the turmoil of the session is only just commencing. I see nothing whatever in the component parts of the Opposition to warrant me in believing that anything like a firm and strong Government will be formed from their side of the House. I shall oppose the motion of the honorable member for the Thames, and I shall also do all in my power to assist the Government in obtaining a fair hearing from this House and from the country.

Captain RUSSELL.—I should like to say one or two words on this question, and particularly in reference to the speech of the honorable member

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for Waitemata, who endeavoured to convince this House that it would be absolutely impossible for the Government to carry on their measures unless they had a majority in this House. Now, I imagine it was during the time the honorable member was in the House that a very remarkable example was afforded by those honorable gentlemen who lately occupied the Treasury benches of the possibility of a Government carrying on not only during one session, but during two sessions, without a majority in this House; and, by a system which they then taught us, I think it is quite possible that the present Government, by taking a leaf out of their book, may so avoid a debate on the no-confidence motion that it will be absolutely impossible to prevent the work of the country being carried on. I do not think it is advisable that such a thing should take place. We on this side of the House hope, honestly and truthfully, that we represent the constitutional party. We are people who are opposed to anything like factious opposition. Such being the case, I think it would be extremely injudicious for us to treat this no-confidence motion in the same way that the no-confidence motion nicknamed "the baby" by the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) was treated two or three sessions ago, when for many weeks that motion was carefully kept down on the Order Paper until the session was so far prolonged that it was impossible to bring the motion on at all. I think the Government would be wrong to resign their position until they have placed their policy before the country. Were I on the Treasury bench I should distinctly refuse to do so, and I should make no apology whatever. I should say, openly and straightforwardly, "I am going to do it," and I should do it. "Obstruct me as much as you choose; I do not care." I believe that would merit the confidence of the House, and would gain the confidence of the people outside the House. And then think of their ingratitude to the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey). All those gentlemen who sit on the Opposition benches owe their position to Sir George Grey. If it had not been for him, they would have been absolutely nowhere now. It may be possible to turn the present Ministry out of their seats; but, without their head, without their brains, without the honorable member for the Thames, it would be absolutely impossible for the honorable gentlemen to hold their seats at all. I say, also, that, whoever is entitled to be called the leader of Liberalism, the honorable member for the Thames is, for it was he who first brought forward that cry, and I must say the honorable gentlemen opposite have treated their leader most ungratefully. It has not been my lot to support the honorable gentleman; it may never be my lot to do so; but, if the present Government is turned out, we shall have a Government with the honorable member for Port Chalmers at its head; and, much as I should feel myself incapable of following the honorable member for the Thames, I should have much more pleasure in doing that than in supporting the honorable member for Port Chalmers, because I feel convinced there is no real Liberalism in him.

The honorable member for Napier (Mr. Sutton), in speaking of the Qualification of Electors Bill of 1875, forgot one important point, which was this: that, when that Bill was before the House, the honorable member for Port Chalmers made a vigorous speech on the subject, which might be compressed into four words, which were, that nobody wanted the Bill. And if he did not want the Bill then, he would not want it now. I believe the honorable gentleman and his party are afraid of it. They know that if it goes to its second reading it will be impossible to burke it—it will be impossible for the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) and the honorable member for Port Chalmers to say, as in 1875, that nobody wants the Bill. That may be the feeling of the honorable member for Port Chalmers now, but, if he should succeed in putting out the present Government, it would be impossible for the Premier of a Liberal Government to say nobody wants the Bill. I therefore say that it would be extremely injudicious to delay this measure any longer. The honorable member for Waitemata said it would be impossible for any Government to carry on who had not a majority in the House. Now, it must be patent to the most partial observer that, even supposing that the honorable gentlemen opposite should succeed in getting on to the Government benches, they can only have a majority of one. I must commend them for the close attention they pay to the movements of honorable members, and for keeping gentlemen at all the doors of the House to tick off those members who may leave it for the purpose of taking a walk; but it will be impossible to keep up such a strain for weeks and months. Because we are in a minority, that is no reason why we should not introduce these Bills, more particularly when we have the knowledge that they are not likely to be introduced by the other side; for the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) voted against this Bill, or against a Bill almost identical with it, Mr. Sheehan voted against it, Mr. Thomson voted against it, and Mr. J. C. Brown voted against it, in 1875; and I have no doubt that people with such enduring characters as they have will not come down now and vote for a Bill which they so seriously disbelieved in three or four years ago. If we look back we shall see that the gentlemen who now compose the Ministry voted for the Bill. The honorable member for Egmont, the honorable member for Kaiapoi, and the honorable member for the Waikato voted for it; and, although I have not the *Hansard* in my hand to see who did and who did not vote for the Bill, it is beyond question that the members on this side represent the Liberal portion of the House, while those who claim to be such advocates of Liberalism are strongly opposed to it. No doubt they will tell you that they had very good reasons for opposing the Bill. One will tell you that it did not go far enough; another will tell you that it did away with the miners' rights; but the old aphorism, that language was given to us to hide our thoughts, seems to me admirably to apply to them. We cannot judge a man save by what he does in this House. Go to

Hansard and see how he votes: that is the only way to tell what he is. We have heard a good deal about Liberalism during the past two years, and we have heard many honorable gentlemen talk about what they have done. And what have they done? Go to the Statute Book, and what do you find there? Nothing. And here is an attempt being made to prolong what has been done for the last two years. An attempt is being made by Ministers to push on these Bills, and they are immediately opposed by the other side. Now, I always vote for a measure that I believe will be advantageous to the country. As a party man, I can usually be depended on to support my party; but I always support any Bill of which I approve; and I would urge those honorable gentlemen to allow these Bills, which are for the good of the country, to come on. Is it merely a question who shall move first in the matter? Have we so little patriotism, as the honorable member for Waitemata puts it, that we refuse to go on because of the fact that somebody-else's name is on the face of the Bill? I cannot believe it, because, if that were so, with the possibility of another want-of-confidence motion coming on in three weeks, the session may be a blank, and these Bills will never be recorded on the Statute Book. We ought to avoid such a thing as that, if possible. The great object ought to be to push on the business as fast as possible, and the only way in which this can be done is to frankly acknowledge that the House desires to pass these measures. Besides, why should the honorable gentlemen be in so great a hurry to turn the present Government off the Ministerial benches? Had I been a member of the late Government, I should never have been a party to giving any colour to those rumours which we hear outside, and which it is absurd to ignore. It would have been to their credit, and, in a political point of view, much to their good, to have challenged the fullest investigation. I should have said, "As soon as you have had time to go through the records, I shall bring a vote of want of confidence against you. If you prove anything against us, well and good; and, if not, we shall then be more strongly established than ever." That would have been a most judicious, and, in their own interest, wise course to have adopted. It is the merest affectation to ignore the feeling that exists in the public mind. Public confidence has been seriously shaken by the rumours that have gone abroad. Go where you will, you hear people talking in the most serious manner of the gross maladministration of the past two or three years, and I think the Government should have every opportunity of probing these statements to the bottom. They should refuse to leave their places until they have had an opportunity of doing so. I think the honorable member for Port Chalmers was wrong not to accept the offer of the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to take the discussion on the want-of-confidence motion on Tuesday next. He must know that it is possible to postpone his motion for an indefinite period, and in the interests of his party he should have accepted the suggestion.

Mr. WHITAKER.—Sir, I believe I am in order in moving that this debate be adjourned until half-past seven o'clock. I do so, because I am happy to say, from what I have heard outside, that better counsels may shortly prevail, and that some compromise will be come to in this unfortunate matter. It appears to me, as far as I have heard from the speeches of honorable members, that there is but one feeling about the matter, and that feeling is, that this discussion is a great waste of the time of the country. Every honorable member who has addressed the House has said the same thing; and yet neither side of the House is willing to give way. Although the leaders of parties have not, I believe, met, still I have heard remarks made outside the House which lead me to believe that some compromise may be arrived at; and therefore I move the adjournment of the debate till this evening. I do so with the more confidence because this is a private members' day, and therefore I am sure honorable members will be glad to have an opportunity of bringing forward the business that is on the Order Paper. My experience in the House itself has not been of long duration, but I have had many opportunities of watching its proceedings, and I do not recollect any occasion on which obstruction has been offered to bringing on the business of private members, which is of great importance to the localities they represent. It would be a very harsh proceeding to offer such obstruction, and therefore I think it would be well to postpone this discussion for a short time. I need hardly remind honorable members on the other side that if the honorable gentleman, the leader of our party, chooses to carry out what he has said the Government could do—namely, use the forms of the House to prevent the want-of-confidence motion being brought on till he has put a clear statement of affairs before the country—he can carry out that course, and, if they compel him, he will, I have no doubt, however reluctantly, do so. I trust, therefore, the adjournment till half-past seven o'clock will be agreed to, so that some concessions may be made on one side and on the other. I apprehend, Sir, I shall be in order in saying a few words on the general question?

Mr. SPEAKER.—On the question of granting leave to introduce the Qualification of Electors Bill—yes.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I want to dispel one delusion which seems to prevail in the mind of that extremely independent member, the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon). Of all the independent members I have ever heard address the House, he is the most curious. The honorable gentleman got up and said he was an independent member, that he wanted this party fight to be stopped, and business to be pressed on; and yet he made the most violent party speech that has been made during this debate, and accused us on this side of the House of obstructing business. It appears to me he was not going the right way to show his independence by attacking so violently the party that was not working with him. Then he said, in the most off-hand way, that we were opposing the wishes of a majority of this

House. How does he know that his side is in a majority?

Mr. SEDDON.—By the last division.

Mr. WHITAKER.—By the last division! I apprehend, if the two members of our party who were absent had been here, it would have been a tie, and on the previous division we had a majority of two. I cannot see, therefore, how we can be said to be in a minority now. It is quite possible that honorable gentlemen on the opposite side may be just as much deceived with regard to their having a majority on the next division as they were when they thought they had a majority before. It is not to be taken as a matter of gospel, because the honorable member for Hokitika says the majority is theirs, that it is so. That is a matter of opinion on his part. I have had as long experience here as he has had, and my opinion is quite as good as his, and I do not feel by any means confident that any such majority exists on that side. My remarks are founded on observation. I do not pretend to know more, but, at all events, I think I know as much as the honorable member; and I am sure his statement is without any foundation. I will show the honorable gentleman and others on his side of the House why that is so, and why there is dissension in their party. I want to know why we see that party without its natural leader, the honorable member for the Thames. I want to know where the honorable member for Dunstan was six or seven years ago, where he was two or three years ago, where he was at the beginning of the session, where he is now, and where he is likely to be before long, in the event of certain contingencies. Is that their majority? Then there is another honorable member who voted with them on the last division, and who has left us. We have tried to drag him back again, but he sticks to his new-found friends at present as firmly as an oyster to a rock. It is therefore absurd to talk about a majority. That honorable gentleman, for notions of his own, left us, and, if disappointment should meet him, he may again be found leaving the ranks of the Opposition. I call attention to these facts to show that those honorable gentlemen have no right to claim that they have a majority. If it were possible to see that there was a good working majority on that side—if we could determine in our own minds that they had a majority able to carry on the business of the country—I should be the first—to use a sporting phrase—to throw up the sponge, and by all means proceed with business. But I cannot see it. I look around the ranks of that party and see those who have voted for triennial Parliaments and for extended franchise, and those who have voted against them: I see Greyites and anti-Greys; I see those who will have nothing to say to Sir George Grey, and those who will have everything to say to him; I see those who say that Sir George Grey is the saviour of New Zealand, and, sitting side by side with them, and ready to go into the same lobby with them, those who say that he is the destroyer of New Zealand. I say that the fortunes of New Zealand should not be lightly given into the hands of a party so composed. They should show us that they have a large and sub-

Captain Russell

stantial majority before they ask us to consent to our party vacating the Government benches. At all events, they should not try to turn us out in the arbitrary manner they seem inclined to use. I am certain the words I now utter will find an echo in the minds of many of those honorable members. There was a strong phalanx which came down here pledged absolutely to support the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey), for reasons which no doubt they very well understood. The late Premier has been deposed, and another king reigns in his stead. Surely those honorable gentlemen are not pledged to the honorable member who is to move the want-of-confidence motion.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable gentleman is straying away from the question before the House.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Sir, I wish to make a personal explanation with regard to what has been stated as to myself by the honorable member. I understand that he says there was a negotiation going on in which I was concerned. I beg to say no such negotiation is now pending—none whatever. It is a mistake altogether. It came to an end at three o'clock.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. I heard a conversation going on in the lobby in a loud tone of voice. The honorable gentleman was there; and I heard a proposition made that he should propose to the Government that the no-confidence motion should be taken after the Native Minister's Statement on Friday evening. I did not say he was pledged to that arrangement. I said I believed the leaders of the parties had not met, and therefore I did not mean to say that the honorable gentleman had agreed to the proposition; but, being challenged, I say I heard that conversation taking place. It is useless that I should mention the names of the honorable members who were present.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The honorable gentleman did not listen long enough. I may refer to the gentlemen who were present, and they will confirm me when I say that I declined to make any terms whatever without the consent of my party to the negotiations.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I said I believed the leaders of the party had not been consulted; but I presumed at the time that the honorable gentleman had communicated with his party. I hoped he would do so, and regret that he has not; for, no doubt, if he had, something would have been agreed to. I did not say the honorable gentleman took upon himself to make any arrangement. Well, Sir, I believe you ruled me out of order in referring to matters connected with the vote of want of confidence. I will therefore not do so. So far as my parliamentary experience goes, these motions for leave to introduce Bills do not generally occupy a very long time, or engage very much the attention of the House. They are not like second readings, and the whole thing can be got through in a very few minutes. The honorable member for Auckland City East spoke very well, as usual, and very much to the point. He said he was quite unaware of how the division

was going, and he further added—what seemed to me at the time to be superfluous—that he did not care. I was glad to find the honorable gentleman in that frame of mind; but I thought that, when the division-bell rang, he would know quite well what lobby to walk into. Of course it would be into the lobby into which those went who did not wish to obstruct business. However, I was going to say the honorable member for Auckland City East made a suggestion that we should take the division upon the postponement of this particular motion, and let the other Government Bills abide by the fate of it. But surely it will not take long to get through all these motions for leave to introduce Bills; there will be no waste of time in taking them all; and then we shall have before the House and the country all those liberal measures which both sides are willing to support. Our object is clear: their object in interrupting these Bills is by no means clear—for this reason, that half-an-hour would get through the whole thing. They seem to have some fear that the Government will get these measures before the country and before this House. I do not know why. I do not know whether it is, as the honorable member for Napier (Mr. Sutton) says, that they are afraid of the Bills themselves. I do not know whether it is that they really do not intend to pass these Bills when they get on those benches. I do not know whether it is that they have a horror, after all they have said about the Premier being a Conservative, of allowing him to introduce these measures. I do not know whether they are afraid that it will be flashed all over the colony that the great Conservative Government, as they termed it, have introduced liberal measures. But why do they not allow these Bills to be introduced? The honorable member for Waitemata, in an admirable speech, said he very much approved of these Bills; that they were very much superior to the Bills of the late Government. I thoroughly agree with that honorable gentleman. I believe that they are infinitely superior to the other Bills, and I feel certain that, if that honorable gentleman had a chance of voting for those Bills, outside of party feeling, he would do so. Now, if those Bills are superior to the others, and if the Government ask leave to introduce them, why not permit that to be done? If those honorable gentlemen opposite get into power it would then be possible for them to take up these Bills; but look at our position. We say that we have a definite and decided reason why we want leave to introduce these Bills. Our reason is, that a number of us belonging to this party are quite as liberal as, and perhaps more so than, the majority of the gentlemen on the other side, and we object altogether to have our title to that name questioned, as it has been inside and outside this House, by the party now in opposition. It has been said of me that I was going to follow certain persons who would never bring down liberal measures. Now, I wish to see this Bill advanced a stage, in order to show the House and the country that the Government are prepared to keep faith with them, and are prepared to scrupulously carry out the engagements entered

into by the Premier. I say that it is only fair to the Premier that he should have an opportunity of vindicating his character against the aspersions cast upon him. I will now proceed to say a few words upon a subject on which there seems to be a misapprehension in the House. I lay it down as an absolute constitutional principle that a Ministry on taking office are entitled to some time to bring down their measures. I will read the following extract from Todd's "Parliamentary Government in England" to show that my premisses are absolutely correct. [Extract read.]

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable gentleman is reading extracts applicable to the want-of-confidence motion, and is therefore out of order.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I bow to your decision, Sir. Some allusion has been made to the circumstances of 1877, as being similar to the present state of affairs; but I think there is a wide difference between them. On the present occasion, there is no proof that there is a majority of the House against Ministers. In 1877 it was perfectly well understood, and admitted by Ministers themselves, that there was a majority against them. But, notwithstanding that there was a majority against them, they still retained power; and these gentlemen, who are now wasting the time of the country in endeavouring to prevent the Government from bringing in their measures, managed to secure a majority in 1878. I cannot understand how those honorable gentlemen can desire to obstruct business when the Government only desire a fair chance of putting forth their policy. It is said that a new Ministry should receive great forbearance. [Extract read.]

Mr. SPEAKER.—I called the honorable member's attention to the fact that he was reading from a book large extracts, which had no bearing on the question of adjournment. The honorable member then said he would bow to my decision; but he is again reading extracts not applicable to the present debate.

Mr. HALL.—We are placed in a difficult position by the action of the honorable gentlemen opposite, in endeavouring to place, on any vote we may come to on this question, a particular construction. They claim, for any vote on this question in which we may be in a minority, the character of a vote of want of confidence. As long as they do that, surely it is right of honorable members to address themselves to that point. If honorable gentlemen persist in that course, it is rather upon them than upon us that the responsibility should rest.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot allow this debate to anticipate the want-of-confidence motion; and I feel it my duty, as far as possible, to restrict it to the question before the House.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I bow to your decision, Sir, with the greatest respect. I have not much more to say upon the question of this adjournment. I hope the House will now vote for the adjournment of the debate until half-past seven o'clock.

Mr. HALL.—There is no doubt that there is a lamentable loss of public time taking place. The

Mr. Whitaker

question is, Who is responsible for it? What is the right course for us to pursue on the present occasion? Of course, Sir, I wish to adhere as closely as possible to your ruling, not to go into that question of want of confidence upon a mere motion for adjournment; but I may go so far as to say that what we are contending for is simply the ordinary and, I may say, the invariable constitutional rule, that a Government coming into office with a majority has a right to a fair trial. It has been said that we are not true Liberals, and that if we came into power with liberal professions we should not give effect to those views when in power. The question now is, whether, under these circumstances, we, who now tell the House that we have liberal measures ready to put before the House and before the country, shall be deprived by an arbitrary vote of the opportunity of placing those measures upon the table of the House. That is the question. As the honorable gentleman stated, a short time indeed would have sufficed to have put these measures upon the Order Paper. We do not ask the House to read these Bills a second time until the question has been decided whether or not we possess the confidence of the House. But I say we have a right, in fairness to ourselves and in fairness to the country, to be in a position to see our measures officially on the table of the House. The honorable member for Grey and Bell—who has not been sufficiently long in this country to be strongly attached to any colonial party, but who has had political experience in the mother-country, and is able to take an impartial view of our proceedings—has shown in the clearest possible manner that we have a right to be allowed to submit our policy to the House and to the country. The honorable gentlemen opposite say that, if we agree to their terms, they will be satisfied. We are not prepared to put our necks under the heels of those honorable gentlemen. We have got the support, if not of the majority of this House, of a very large section of it. Honorable members may possibly carry a vote of want of confidence. I do not think they will; but, supposing they do, then it will be for us to say, as has been said by greater and better men than ourselves, that we will remain on these seats until our Bills are placed before the House. In deference to your ruling, Sir, I will not go into the constitutional question at present—into precedents which run back a hundred years and come down to modern times in the Old Country—but I go back to the history of this colony. Within my own personal knowledge, on three separate occasions, the Government has stood in a position similar to the present. On every one of those occasions the great constitutional principle for which we are contending has been asserted by the House. The House would not condemn the Government unheard on any one of those occasions. On the first of them, some twenty-three years ago, I personally occupied the position I now occupy—the position of Colonial Secretary. We were allowed nine days on that first occasion. On the second, a greater length of time was allowed. On the third occasion, in 1877, the House distinctly, in

so many words, refused to consider a motion of want of confidence until the Government had had a fair opportunity of putting their policy before the House. When the proper time comes, I shall be prepared to show that every constitutional rule is in favour of the position that we now take up. It is a matter of greater importance now, when we are making history in the infancy of a community, that we should lay down and adhere to the great constitutional principles which are to guide us for the future, than that there should be a paltry party triumph. It is said that the Opposition have by arguments—not used inside of this House, but outside of it—converted one or two gentlemen who voted in our favour. That is really the pith and marrow of their speeches. They say, You had a majority the other day; we have got a majority now. And therefore, without any discussion of policy at all, we are at once to leave these seats. We should be altogether faithless to the trust reposed in us if we listened for one moment to that proposition. We simply claim the length of time which on a former occasion of this kind was granted to another Government. And yet my honorable friend the member for Akaroa, who claims to be head and shoulders above everybody else in his impartiality, descends to the level of miserable party considerations. My honorable friend seconded the motion for “the previous question,” in order that these liberal measures, of which he professed to be such an admirer, should not be proceeded with. Would the honorable gentleman like to go back to Canterbury with us and say he turned out the Government because he did not believe in their measures? When we want to prove ourselves true Liberals, the honorable member seconds a motion which would deprive us of the opportunity. What miserable inconsistency! I am glad to see that my honorable friend is blushing. There is hope of his repentance. If we have a division, I am sure he will come to our side. As I said before, what is now the question? The question is, whether we shall go on with the motion of want of confidence on Tuesday, or whether we shall have it on Friday. The difference between us is but a single day.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—You can carry on the business on Monday.

Mr. HALL.—We have been quite ready to entertain that proposal. We have offered all the concessions we can possibly make without absolute loss of self-respect. Did I understand the honorable gentleman to suggest that the business could be proceeded with on Monday?

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—If the motion were taken on Friday, we could go on with the debate on Monday.

Mr. HALL.—We have offered every fair concession. The question now is, whether, for the sake of one sitting-day, we are to lay down a wrong constitutional principle. I am, of course, only stating what I believe to be the sentiments of those honorable gentlemen who support me. I am entirely in their hands. I am giving effect to their views in the course I am adopting. I may sum up the position in a few words: Honor-

able gentlemen opposite are—I do not use the word offensively—exceedingly obstinate in the matter: but we will be as firm as they are obstinate. I would ask my honorable friend the member for Akaroa, who does not seem altogether lost as yet to a sense of propriety, not to take up a position intended to lead the country to believe that what we are doing now is not endeavouring to carry out constitutional principles, but merely engaging in an indecent scramble for office. That is the appearance this struggle would wear. The Opposition have, outside of this House, made one or two converts, and, as soon as they have done that, the Government are to be unseated untried. That will wear the appearance of an indecent scramble for office. I ask honorable gentlemen, for the sake of the character of this House, not to entertain a proposal of this kind, and not to object to the reasonable proposal which we have put before the House. If they do, it will inspire me with a very sad feeling; it will indicate an utter want of conciliation, an utter want of a spirit of concession, and an utter want of forbearance. If honorable gentlemen opposite do take these seats, they will find that there never was a Government which had need of so much forbearance, of so much conciliation, and of so much concession as theirs. If they make this unfortunate exhibition of a contrary spirit before they have any actual official responsibility to deal with, how can they possibly go on as a Government? They will have to make concessions at every point. It augurs exceedingly badly for the happiness of the political family which aspires to these seats. I will not trouble the House with any further remarks at present. Of course the debate has to go further. If it should be adjourned, I hope my honorable friend the member for Akaroa will endeavour to impose a more considerate disposition upon his colleagues—I do not say upon the leader of the Opposition. I believe, if that honorable gentleman had been allowed to follow out his own inclination, we should have arrived at an arrangement long ago. I have known the honorable gentleman for many years, and I have never, as a rule, found him to be at all unreasonable. I know that above all things he abhors waste of time. If the debate is adjourned until half-past seven o'clock, I hope honorable members will then be able to come to some arrangement. We have done enough to show the country that for this loss of time that has taken place—a loss of time exceedingly to be deplored—not our firmness, but the obstinacy of the Opposition is responsible.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Sir, I may be allowed to say one word before the question is put. As far as I am concerned, I absolutely deny that it is either love of place or love of power that actuates me in the position I have taken up. I know very well that in taking up that position I am holding myself up as a conspicuous mark for the shafts of envy, malice, and detraction. I am quite aware of that. But what I am really aiming at is to be instrumental, even in a humble way, in the establishing in this country of real parliamentary government—that is, true, genuine go-

vernment by party—to the absence of which in the past we may attribute a great deal of the evils of this country. The absence of true party government has been very detrimental, to say the least of it, to the interests of New Zealand. My main object is to assist in my own humble way to have real, true parliamentary government established here. If the object of this delay is simply to enable the Government to get all their measures placed officially before us, there is nothing whatever to prevent that. Surely it could have been done this afternoon. Had the Premier agreed to take the no-confidence motion on Friday, as we suggested, all the measures now on the Order Paper might have been advanced to a second reading to-day. I have no desire to waste the time of the House. Repeatedly the honorable member asks us, What is the question? Sir, I say, "To be, or not to be? That is the question." I therefore think we should go to a division as soon as possible.

Mr. BOWEN.—The honorable gentleman has again talked of the existence of parties in this House, and he says that, above all, he desires that there should be party government. Now, I would like to ask him again—if he wishes really to discuss the question of party—on what lines these parties are to be formed; because I am perfectly satisfied, from conversations I have had with honorable gentlemen on both sides of this House since this question has been before us, even if I had not been convinced of it before, that there is no party in this House—no party based on intelligible principles. The honorable gentleman may talk about party lines, and may talk about party votes, but the fact is, that it is merely a personal question that is dividing the House; and when he is laying down the law in this way to the House and to the present Government as to what they are to do, he ought to remember that he was a member of a Government that has just been condemned by the House for its maladministration. —(No.)—That is the case—condemned by two Parliaments for maladministration; and it comes very ill from a gentleman who has been in that position to say that the honorable gentlemen who have been called to the position of Ministers of the Crown, and intrusted with the administration of the country, should not even have an opportunity of laying their measures before the country and the House. Now, Sir, when this is the case, it is necessary for us to ask why this opposition is made—why those honorable gentlemen opposite are so afraid that the Government may be allowed to lay their measures before the House. I can only conceive, under the present circumstances, two reasons. One must be, that they are afraid of the country and the House having an opportunity of comparing and contrasting the measures of the present Government with those which have been laid on the table or promised by the late Government. That is one reason which would account for their conduct, and I believe they are afraid of having the careful measures which are now being laid before the country contrasted with the measures of the previous Ministry. Last year we saw an Electoral Bill brought down by the Government, and we saw at the same

time an Electoral Bill introduced by a private member of the House—an honorable gentleman who is not now in this Chamber, the Hon. Mr. Whitaker—and it was by universal consent admitted that the machinery of the latter Bill was infinitely superior to that of the Government Bill. And, Sir, there is another reason that suggests itself to me why those honorable gentlemen are determined to obstruct the Government in their endeavour to lay these Bills before the House. They do not wish that the echo from the country should come back to this House before they have been able to take another division. They do not wish to hear what the country has to say about measures which this Government are going to lay on the table of the House. They do not choose that the new members of this House should hear what their constituents have to say about the position of public affairs, as revealed by the Ministerial Statements we are getting from the present Government. By keeping up a sort of terrorism over members, and by threatening to placard them all over the country if they do not obey orders, they are trying to frighten those who are new to this House, and who have not yet thoroughly established themselves within what they are pleased to call party lines. They are trying to snatch a division by coercing these honorable gentlemen before they have heard what their constituents have to say to the policy of the present Government. These are the only two reasons which can suggest themselves to any reasonable men for the action which the Opposition are at present taking. Because, after all, are they facilitating the progress of business in the House? It is perfectly well known that the Government have taken up a fair and reasonable stand, and that they are backed by their party in so doing. In fact, I am convinced that if the Government were to give way, and to allow the Opposition to dictate to them in this matter before they had an opportunity of laying their policy before the country, they would lose the support which they are now entitled to from a large part of this House. There is a very large section in this House which has determined that the Government shall have the opportunity to which they are constitutionally entitled; and if the Ministry were in a cowardly way to give up their right and their position, they would forfeit the esteem of the honorable gentlemen who are prepared to support and follow them now. Therefore I say the honorable gentlemen who are endeavouring to prevent an arrangement being made which only involves a question of the difference of a day, are rendering probable the postponement of the business of the country for an indefinite time. They must know that they are doing so, and that in the course they are taking they are neither consulting the interests of the country nor advancing the progress of business in this House. The fact is, that honorable gentlemen are forgetting, as I said before, that the question that was really before the country at the last election, and the question which has been before this Parliament and the previous one, was one of administration, and that good administration is more important to this House than a great many of the questions of

Mr. Macandrew

policy which are constantly being brought up. What we want is good, sound administration; and I say that the gentlemen who are now on the Government benches command the confidence of the country, both from their character and from the large experience they have had in political affairs.—(No.)—Yes, I say character, Sir; and I do not think the honorable member for Waitaki is entitled—

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I did not.

Mr. BOWEN.—The honorable gentleman interjects constantly, and he interjected "Character."

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I did not.

Mr. BOWEN.—I am told it was the honorable member for Caversham. All I can say is, that those honorable gentlemen will not be affected as to their character by the honorable member's opinion. I say that their character is far above any imputation which can be thrown upon it by the honorable gentleman, and that it does command the confidence of the country. It is a monstrous thing that, when honorable gentlemen have been intrusted with the administration of the country in a fair and constitutional manner, the gentlemen whose administration has lately been condemned should be the men to come forward, and say they will not allow them to bring their policy before the House and the country. The House will insist that their policy shall be laid before the country, and those who support them will take very good care that every possible means that this House allows shall be used to enable them to place their policy before the country fairly. Now, what the Government have asked is simply this: that a Minister who has charge of one of the most arduous departments of the Government—the Native Department—who has been at work night and day in preparing a Statement with regard to that department—who I am afraid is overworking himself so far as his health is concerned—that this honorable gentleman should have the time which is necessary for him to prepare that Statement; and the Government has told the House that he will be unable to make it until Friday next.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It has been granted.

Mr. BOWEN.—No, Sir; it has not been granted. A Minister is not going to make an important statement of that sort in the middle of a want-of-confidence debate. Such a proposal is a monstrous one. It is absolutely indecent to attempt to press the Government in that way; and it is an indecency which will be resented, not only by this House, but by the country. The Hon. the Native Minister will give us a Statement on Native Affairs, which are notoriously in a very critical position, and he will inform the House of the views of the Government regarding those affairs—as I understand, and as has been stated to the House—on Friday evening; and the Government say that when that is done—if there is no obstruction by other persons—they will, on the next sitting-day, notwithstanding the pressure of work, take the motion of want of confidence. They are thus acting in a very different way from the manner in which the late Government acted in 1877; but they wish to deal

fairly and reasonably with the House. They have stretched a point to meet the honorable gentlemen opposite, and I say they cannot go one step further towards meeting them. If those honorable gentlemen do not choose to accept the reasonable offer that is made, on them be the responsibility of the delay which will take place; and delay will certainly take place, because the House is determined that the Government shall have fair-play.

Mr. MOSS.—I think we might very fairly accept the responsibility. I, for one, am perfectly satisfied to do so. I do not think we ought to suffer ourselves to be misled by words used one day in one sense and the next day in another. Nothing astonishes me more now than to hear the honorable member for Kaiapoi speak of the arduous duties of the Native Department. Why, we were always told that the Native Department would be abolished. The late Opposition were perpetually inveighing against the Native Department—perpetually declaring that the sooner it was abolished the better for the country—that work was created simply because the department existed, and that, when they were in power, that, at all events, would be one of the excrescences that would be swept away. Now, Sir, we hear of the arduous duties devolving upon the Native Minister. I wish sincerely that, instead of wasting a day here, as has been the case, the Native Minister had remained in his office and made a step towards that Statement which we are to hear on Friday night. If the Native Minister had been excused from attending the debates of the House for the present, he might even have prepared the Statement by to-morrow. The honorable member for Waipa quoted a passage from Todd, forgetting, however, to add that the Ministry referred to—Pitt's Ministry—were kept in office so long by the good graces and support of the King. Without that, they could not have existed. This Ministry can expect no such support. They do not hold office in the interests and by command of the Sovereign, as Pitt's Ministry did; and I presume they do not for a moment contend that they hold office in the interests and by command of the Governor. Therefore the two cases are not parallel. Then, Sir, we are told that administration is more important than legislation. That is, I believe, a heresy. I consider that the legislation now before us is of a most important character, because on this legislation depends the maintenance of a fair incidence of taxation for all time to come. That is the main reason why I am so anxious to see these legislative measures carried out.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

ONEHUNGA WATER RESERVE BILL.

Mr. HAMLIN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, did not think it necessary to detain the House at any great length, inasmuch as the

preamble of the Bill fully explained the reasons for introducing the measure. Honorable members belonging to the Provincial District of Auckland would recollect that, at the time this education reserve was made, it was made with a view of stopping the exercise of certain scrip which had been issued to Mr. Busby. This reserve was made an educational one in order to stop the effect which the exercise of Mr. Busby's scrip would have had on it. It was understood that in the course of time it would be returned by the Education Board, and that it would be reserved as an endowment for the Borough of Onehunga. He did not think, however, that the Education Board had the power to hand it back; and this short measure provided that after the passing of this Bill it was competent for this reserve, under the written authority of His Excellency the Governor, to become vested in the Borough Council of Onehunga as an inalienable trust. It had been for years past used as a general watering-place for the farmers and others resident outside of Onehunga, and it would be for the benefit of these people that the reserve should be vested in the Borough Council of Onehunga. Those who knew anything of the Epsom District were aware that during the summer-time it was very much in want of water, and, if this reserve were not made, people would be put to the necessity of driving their cattle a greater distance for watering purposes than they had been in the habit of doing. It was provided by the Bill that the Borough Council of Onehunga should plant the reserve—not for the purpose of shutting out the public, but for the purpose of beautifying the reserve. As he had said, the preamble of the Bill fully explained the whole matter, and he would simply now content himself with moving the second reading, reserving to himself the right to address the House at greater length in reply, should there be any opposition to the measure, which he did not presume would be the case.

Mr. SWANSON would like to know whether the Board of Education had had notice that this Bill would be brought in. He would also like to know whether this reserve was to be made a source of revenue to the people of Onehunga. He would like to know how the rights of the general public were to be preserved. He did not think that any objection would be raised to any amount of planting being done, so long as access could be had to the water. So long as the people of Onehunga beautified the place no objection would be raised against them; but it would be wrong to deprive the general public of their rights without telling them that such was intended to be done. He did not know whether the public or the Education Board had received any notice of this Bill. He might state at once that he never heard of any warning being given. He did not wish to oppose the Bill, but merely desired certain information before voting for the second reading.

Mr. W. J. HURST suggested the postponement of the motion for the second reading until that day week.

Sir G. GREY said that, with regard to the question raised by the honorable member for

Mr. Hamlin

Newton, he would state that probably he (Sir G. Grey) knew more about this subject than any other person, as he had originally made this reservation for the public. These springs were reserved for the world at large—for everybody. They were very valuable springs indeed; and in the original reservation there was no intention whatever of handing them over as a source of profit to any particular borough. The country in the neighbourhood was subject to drought in the summer, and certainly the original intention of the reservation of the springs was that everybody might have recourse to them for the purpose of obtaining water. Upon the other hand the time perhaps had now come when it would be desirable that the springs should be vested in some body which would make regulations for their use and preservation; and, if provision were put in the Bill which would prevent the borough making any profit from the water, he thought the Borough Council would be as good a body as any other to which they could be handed over. But certainly to hand them over to the borough as a means of raising a revenue, with power to shut all other persons out if they pleased, would be totally contrary to the original intention with which these springs were set apart for a reserve. Then, upon the education question, he really did not think the Education Board ought to be allowed to make a profit out of these springs. The Education Board was supplied with funds by the colony at large—what he might call ample endowments were provided for it—and he thought it should be viewed exactly in the same light as the Borough Council, and that the springs should be considered to be vested in the whole public, to whom it would be a matter of the greatest importance to be enabled to obtain water from the springs free of charge. He thought provision should be put into the Bill to obtain these rights.

Mr. ROLLESTON thought the House was entitled to more information upon the subject before the Bill was read a second time, and he therefore hoped it would be postponed. There was no doubt the reserve was originally vested in the Superintendent of Auckland, and if it had not been made an education reserve it would belong to the Crown. But it had been made a reserve for purposes of education, and, under the Act of 1877, would become vested in the Education Commissioners. It was well known that the local Boards of Education, under the existing law, were entitled to the revenue arising from these reserves, and before the House dealt with this question there ought to be some proper understanding in the matter. The Bill practically changed the purposes of the reserve, and asked the Crown to resign the revenue which would be raised from it for educational purposes. He agreed with the honorable member for the Thames that, if there were valuable springs on the land, they should be preserved for the use of the general public in a way in which this Bill would not preserve them. He should be happy to assist the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill to put it in a proper shape when he knew more about the matter, and had ascertained the views of the

trustees who were affected by it. It was a mistake to go on with such a Bill without apprising the people affected by it.

Mr. READER WOOD said they now saw precisely what he suggested they would see—namely, that in commencing the private business they would drift into confusion, because of there being no one to lead the House. All private Bills involved matters of policy, and it was the duty of the Government, when a private Bill was introduced, to ascertain what rights it affected, and inform the House of the precise position of the matter. The Minister of Lands now said that if the honorable member for Franklin would come and see him he would arrange matters, and put his Bill into shape. He ought to have done all that before. He felt sure that all the other private Bills would have to be postponed, because the Government were not in a position to lead the House, to tell them the nature of the Bills, or to deal with them in any way.

Mr. BOWEN said the Minister of Lands had led the House. It was the duty of the Government to see that no injustice was done to the persons affected by the promoters of the Bill, and the Minister of Lands had distinctly and carefully guarded that point. None knew better than the honorable member for Waitemata that no Government pretended to know all the details of private Bills. The duty of Ministers was to guard the public interests, and that they had taken care to do.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Bill had only just been circulated, so that he had had no opportunity to carefully study its contents.

Mr. GISBORNE hoped the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill would consent to postpone the second reading. It appeared that the reserves were vested in trustees for certain purposes; and it was a very dangerous thing, after Parliament had given land to a certain trust, to deal with the land and change the trust without the consent of the trustees, or without compensation in case of divesting them of property. That was a practice the House ought not to adopt without further consideration, and he hoped the honorable gentleman would consent to the postponement of the second reading.

Mr. HAMLIN said there appeared to be a misconception in the minds of honorable members who opposed the second reading of the Bill. They seemed to have an idea that the land was absolutely handed over in trust for educational purposes. In his few remarks in moving the second reading he thought he made it sufficiently clear that the reserve had simply been called an education reserve to prevent it from being taken up under the scrip issued to Mr. Busby. He did not know that it had in any way been properly reserved as an education reserve. But suppose it were taken by the Education Board, and were let in order to assist the educational requirements of the Auckland Provincial District, what would then be the position of the people of Epsom and other inhabitants of the district who required water for their stock? It would be under the entire control of the lessee, whoever he might be; and he could charge for the use of the water of

the springs. The honorable member for Newton asked whether the Education Board of Auckland were aware of the introduction of this measure. In answer to that, he might say that the Bill was introduced and circulated last session, so that neither the Education Board nor anybody else could say that they were taken by surprise. If honorable members would allow the Bill to be read a second time now, he would promise that no further steps should be taken for ten or twelve days, so that full opportunity would be given for all necessary inquiry.

Bill read a second time.

MINISTRY.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Sir, I beg to move, That the House do now adjourn. I regret exceedingly that I am driven to the adoption of this course; but I do not see that we are justified in going on with any business until the position of the Government in this House is satisfactorily settled. We offered to-day to go on with the business on condition that the Government would agree to the no-confidence motion being brought on on Friday. The Government having refused to do so, I can see no other course open to me but to move, That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. HALL.—My honorable friend has frequently said that he did not wish to obstruct the business of the House—that he would do anything rather than that. Now we have the whole evening before us. There is a large amount of private business which has stood upon the Order Paper for a considerable time, and which we might easily get through this evening; and the leader of the Opposition tells us that we must throw it all on one side and let it take its chance, and for no reason that I can see which at all justifies such a proceeding. If the honorable gentleman has so mismanaged his notice of motion as to get it on the Order Paper in such a position that it cannot be taken to-day, that is his fault. I do not think private members should be made to suffer for that. It is a great pity that the private business, which is of great importance to the country, should not be gone on with. I should deplore the waste of so much valuable time, and I think that will be the feeling of the House. However, if the honorable gentleman is bent on adopting that course, the private business must give way, because it is in the power of honorable members to obstruct to such an extent that we shall have to accept the motion; but I hope the honorable gentleman will withdraw it, in order that we may get through as much private business as possible.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, a great many honorable gentlemen, in speaking on the subject which occupies our attention just now, have said they spoke as independent members—as unprejudiced persons. Now, certainly, if any man in the House can speak as an independent member, and can offer advice in that capacity, it is myself. I stand here an outcast among men—first of all, deposed from those benches, and, secondly, having abandoned the position I held as leader of a great party. I will first address myself to this question.

We have been told there has been a great loss of time; and there has been a great wailing, more especially from the Government benches, over that supposed loss of time. I say no time has been lost. The time supposed to have been lost has been an inestimable boon to this country. I have had the great pleasure of sitting here and hearing honorable gentlemen, upon both sides of the House, irrevocably pledge themselves to most liberal measures, bidding against one another as men do at an auction, promising the community at large to introduce a system of democracy which we should not have reached for years under other circumstances; and all through yearnings for place and desires for pelf. The country now stands fifty years in advance of the position it occupied at the beginning of this session. I stand here with confidence. My desire is accomplished. I know that for New Zealand is gained now the certainty of measures which those who live in this country have for years desired.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—Honorable gentlemen cannot retract. They must aid in obtaining these measures. They may say "No," but they cannot help themselves; they are pledged. Out of office or in office I will drag them as my slaves at the wheels of my chariot. They shall pass those measures. Though they hate me, they shall not go into the lobbies against me; they shall go into the same lobby as myself, and shall bestow upon New Zealand measures so liberal that I should not have dared to propose them, knowing they would be defeated. Is this loss of time? No; it is a triumphant gain. That is the first point. Let not those honorable gentlemen who have wavered be afraid their constituents will be angry with them on account of the loss of time, for such will not be the case. They will be glorified by their constituents for having achieved that which New Zealand longed for.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—The Government whip says, "No." Perhaps he represents the secret thoughts of Ministers; but those thoughts will not find utterance. Though such may be their secret views, they will not dare to stand up in the face of the country and avow feelings of that kind. Next I proceed to the constitutional view of this question. I say that it is our duty, our bounden duty, the duty of those likely to take a place in the Government, and the duty of those who, like myself, are to remain in obscurity, to insist upon the Governor removing those friends of his from those benches. What has taken place? This House passed a resolution lately that it had no confidence in the Government "as at present constituted." It was the duty of every good man to bow to that resolution of the House; and I, wishing to set a good example first of all, strove to give effect to the decision of the House that a reconstruction of the Ministry should take place. I failed in that. Evidently, in the Governor's mind there was an intention that that should not be done. Having failed in that, Sir, I was told by my friends that the motion was pointed at myself. "You are," they said, "the one obstacle that now stands in the way of the

great principles which you have at heart being carried out, because there are honorable gentlemen, some two, three, or four members from the South, who would vote with us for those liberal measures if you were out of the way, and who would give us a majority in the House, but who will not do so as long as you are leader of the party." I bowed to the decision of the House, as I think every man ought to do. I retired. I placed myself in accord with both sides of the House, to obtain principles I longed for. I sacrificed myself unhesitatingly, and dropped back into that obscurity from which I originally came. It was the duty of honorable gentlemen to follow the example I set them; but what did they do? The honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government, having been sent for by the Governor—did he try to carry out the decision to which the House had come? Did he try to reconstruct the Government? No, Sir. After he had made efforts—as I believe he did—to win over some members of our party, and to form a coalition, not a reconstruction, and finding he could not succeed in a reconstruction, had he been a patriot or a statesman he would have gone back to the Governor and said, "I have failed to give effect to the decision of the House of Representatives." But he did no such thing. He formed a Government to support certain views, not views for carrying out liberal measures of electoral reform, but views with regard to continuing the grasping of the public lands of the country, the holding of positions of power to be enjoyed by his friends, and in favour of the great landed aristocracy which it has been attempted to set up here.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—I affirm that such is the case. I affirm it was a foregone conclusion that such a party should be established here, and I affirm that ruinous steps have been taken for doing that. If there was the least doubt on that point in my mind, what has taken place this day would have justified what I have said. Almost every honorable member who has spoken to-day for the Ministry is interested, either as agent or directly, in great land claims. By one of the speakers a claim was set up for clients of his over Native lands for which the Government had actually paid certain moneys, and an attempt was made to repurchase from the Natives the whole land to the extent of 320,000 acres, and the Government were required to enter into an agreement that, upon condition of the claim of the clients of this gentleman being abandoned over a great part of the land, they would let these parties interested acquire 40,000 acres of freehold of the best land in New Zealand. The communication I received from a colleague went on to say, "You must remember, if you do not agree with this, it may lead to a change in the Government of the country, and you must be prepared for it." Well, I refused—I was prepared for the change—and I met my fate like a man. I would rather meet my fate in that way than have been a party to any grossly improper transaction of the kind. I may add, this Native land so claimed was, I am informed, surveyed by stealth, so as to deceive

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the Natives. I can state other cases in which other gentlemen made claims on land—but which until recently were unknown to me, the transactions having been conducted by confidential correspondence—and which having been refused, these gentlemen became bitter enemies to myself. In fact, one gentleman, who had, I am informed, wished wrongfully to acquire 4,000 acres of Native land, required my resignation from office and my retirement from public life at the end of the session if his vote was to be given on the side of the Government in the recent no-confidence debate.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Name.

Sir G. GREY.—I shall give no name. It is needless that I should name the honorable gentleman. He sits in the House, and can name himself. Both the honorable gentlemen whom I have alluded to now sit before me. Let them stand up and say if I have not spoken rightly. I am saying this in their presence.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I should like to ask you, Sir, whether the honorable member has any right to cast imputations upon members of the House. This is an accusation of a very serious character made against some one who has to-day addressed the House, and we ought to know at whom that accusation is levelled. As one of the speakers, at any rate, I should like to know if I am referred to.

Mr. SPEAKER.—No honorable member has any right to impute motives to members of this House.

Sir G. GREY.—I imputed no motives. I stated facts.

Hon. MEMBERS.—The facts were heard by all.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—If those statements were facts, the persons referred to are, I apprehend, disqualified from sitting in this House; and, as the honorable gentleman referred to persons sitting in the House, I suggest that the names ought to be given.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Christchurch City (Sir G. Grey) says he has not imputed motives, and the House must accept his denial. I did not hear any motive attributed. The honorable member for Grey and Bell asked me if it was in order to attribute motives, and I said it was not in order.

Sir G. GREY.—Now I proceed to the manner in which this Government was formed, and I say this: that there is an honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government who has, I believe, upon two previous occasions resigned his seat in the Upper House for the purpose of taking a seat here.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—Certainly there has been one other occasion. Twice he has resigned. I say, again, that he ought not to have been allowed to resign his position in the Upper House without the Governor having been advised to receive his resignation. A resignation is not complete until the Governor approves of it; and I say, the Governor having accepted his resignation without advice, the putting him back into this House for the purpose of leading a party was a personal act.

Mr. HALL.—I would ask the honorable gentle-

man if he did not advise the acceptance of my resignation.

Sir G. GREY.—If I had advised it, I should not have disclosed that advice. I did not advise it. I say, therefore, that he sits here the personal representative of the Governor in this House. Sir, that is the case. Unless that had been done, he could not have been here. That is one way in which the great party connected with the landed aristocracy has been formed here. In the case of the Legislative Council itself, we have seen a gentleman called to that body for the purpose of immediately being made a Minister, after he had just been rejected by a constituency. That was a most unusual and improper act. Had he been solely called to the Legislative Council, I should gladly have seen him called there, on account of his past experience, his abilities, and his claim to that position; but to be put into the Legislative Council for the purpose of being at once made a Minister, after having been rejected by a constituency, is an unknown thing. I believe I can defy any honorable gentleman to produce a precedent of the kind. I say, therefore, there was a foregone conclusion to make a Ministry of that kind. That Ministry having been forced upon the House without the recommendation of the House that the Government should be reconstructed being attended to, I say it was our duty to say that not for one hour shall they remain on those benches. It is essential, if this House is to possess its proper freedom, and its proper degree of liberty, that it should determine who are to be its Ministers, for the Ministry are really the representatives of this House. That is absolutely essential, and I say those honorable gentlemen do not represent the House; they did not get fairly into their seats; they do not represent the country, and it is our duty to ourselves, for the purpose of giving a good example, to say they shall not occupy those benches a moment longer. This may be thought a trifling question, but really upon this question depends the entire future of New Zealand. I believe this is the first time that an attempt of this kind has been made to force a Ministry upon the House of Representatives of New Zealand, and I say that, if we do our duty to ourselves, if we do our duty to the country, we shall resist that attempt, and shall insist upon their leaving the position they hold. If no other course can be found for bringing that about, I say an address should be moved to the Governor requiring him to dismiss them from their position. Let honorable members recollect this: that the question we are really fighting now is the question which is uppermost in the minds of the people of a great part of that portion of the world which is inhabited by the Anglo-Saxon race: it is distinctly the question of the tenure of land. I say, again, that the honorable gentleman who has been put at the head of the Government under the circumstances I have stated (Mr. Hall) is the real representative of what I may call the "land ring" of Canterbury. He has, above all men, been implicated in land transactions—in the making of laws, in the administering of laws, and, to a cer-

tain extent, in benefiting himself by the laws so passed and so administered. Therefore he distinctly represents what I call the great landed aristocracy of the Middle Island. Again, the honorable gentleman who has been called to the Legislative Council (Mr. Whitaker) most distinctly represents the same position in the northern part of New Zealand that that honorable gentleman (Mr. Hall) occupies in the central portion of the colony; and, if this question of land for the people—if the question of the preservation of the rights of the people—is to be fought out, we must fight it out now with the Ministry which has just been forced upon us, or it will be lost for ever. There must be no waver- ing, there must be no slinking back, in this fight. It is a desperate fight. It is a fight going on in England as well as here. It is a fight in which the present Tory landowners of Great Britain are deeply interested. It is a struggle in which they will make every effort to have their views carried out here, lest New Zealand should set an ex- ample detrimental to the aristocracy of England—which example it will set, which example it is determined to set, which example we who are working for the people will see that they are enabled to set. Enabled to set, Sir, because a happy time has arisen in this country. All re- cent debates in this House show that the time has arrived for conferring all these electoral rights on the people—show that the time is come when the masses are at last to be considered. Those who for years have been neglected are to be thought of at last. This is the dawning of a new era. Long ago these liberties should have been given to the people of New Zealand. South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria—all the other colonies—have obtained them but this; and the New Zealand people are not sluggards, are not laggards. It is not their fault that they have been left behind. It is the fault of those who for years have had the power to confer these rights on the people, and have never done so, but who now, for the first time, in their anxiety to work out this great land question for their own interest, have suddenly woken up to the neces- sity of conferring the rights which years ago should have been granted to every citizen of this country. Let us weigh this question thoroughly and deliberately. A great deal has been said about the example set by Mr. Pitt, and how George III. chose a Ministry for himself, which represented his own views—how George III. favoured a par- ticular Ministry, and kept them in office against the wishes of a majority of the House of Com- mons, and how a great precedent has been set in that case, which we should allow to be followed. To this I answer there is no analogy between the cases. George III. was an hereditary monarch, whose family had reigned over the country for years before, and whose children would reign after him. He had therefore an hereditary in- terest in the country of which he was governor: he knew that upon his wise administration de- pended in a great measure the rights of his successors. Mr. Pitt was a young and untried man, who was known to hold most liberal politi- cal views. How, then, can you compare the

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action of the hereditary monarch in England with that of the Governor of a colony, who is here to-day and gone to-morrow—a stranger to the country he rules, and to its people? How can you compare a gentleman who comes here perhaps for only a few months, and is liable to have his ears abused by wily men, with a monarch permanently sitting on the British throne, and handing down his power to his children? There is no analogy. This House is the real governing power in this colony. It must hold its powers, and not part with them. Here, also, we have no young, inexperienced, untried men in the Government. On the contrary, we object to them because of their antecedents. I object to the Premier because he has done more harm to the people of New Zealand, by the land laws he has made and administered and availed himself of, than any other man in the country—

Mr. WHITAKER.—I rise to a point of order. Does not the rule apply, Sir, when the adjourn- ment of the House is moved, which applies to special questions, that the no-confidence motion must not be alluded to?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I did not understand the honorable member who was speaking to be refer- ring to the no-confidence motion. Great latitude is allowed to honorable members when speaking on the motion for the adjournment of the House; but honorable members must not allude to any- thing set down on the Order Paper.

Sir G. GREY.—I was justifying the adjourn- ment of the House, and the adjournment of all public business, until this question is settled. These frequent interruptions are unseemly. They embarrass any man in his speech, and drive ideas out of his mind. Those who dislike to hear some things said have recourse to these inter- ruptions; but it is hardly fair. Well, Sir, I was showing that there is no analogy between untried Mr. Pitt and those tried gentlemen; and that there was no analogy between a Governor who comes to a country and people he knows nothing of, and stays here from day to day—who may pass away at any moment—and an hereditary monarch sitting upon his throne and training young statesmen to administer the government, and guided by constant intercourse with the greatest minds of the day. There is no analogy whatever. Mr. Pitt created his own precedent. It was new at that time. It is now quoted as something great, and something that, under like circumstances, might be followed. We, Sir, will create our own precedent on this occasion. We have new circumstances. We are the founders of this young nation, and we are capable of forming our own precedent. And we will do it. That precedent is, that we will allow no busi- ness to go on as long as those gentlemen occupy those benches. I give in my voice to creating that precedent. It may cause a little delay. That is no harm. Each day the fight is going on some- thing like an auction. "Go on; let the bid be high; do not knock down the goods yet—a higher bid will be given; do not knock down the goods to the first bidders—greater advantages for the people will yet be bidden." I will now pass on to another point, and I may say this: that efforts

have been made throughout this part of the Empire to confirm a state of things by which men who have from the public lands gained considerable capital can amass great properties for themselves—to create classes in this country. Some people say I have set class against class. No. They created a class themselves. There were no classes here originally: and now, because we try to get our own, it is said that class rises against class. The honorable member for Grey and Bell said, the other night, "We Liberals in England go upon this principle. We rob nothing from any one; we take nothing from any one; we bestow upon all." Why, Sir, who has taken from us—from the public of New Zealand? Who but those who passed such laws as the odious land law which was passed by Canterbury members, giving leases to runholders for ten years longer, and thereby committing a great injustice upon the large masses of the people? We do not try to take anything from them, but what we endeavour to do is to prevent more being taken from us. We take our stand there. No more shall be taken from us, because, Sir, those large landed estates carry great rights with them. Look, for instance, at this statement we had the other night concerning the County of Cheviot. Only three great landowners in that county. What does it do? It gives one honorable gentleman a seat in the Legislative Council. That arises from owning land. And it gives them, with a ridiculously small constituency, the return of a member to this House. That arises from land again. Why, it is land which gives everything here. That is what we object to. That is the unfairness we object to. Last night, when I was stating that land was such a valuable commodity, and that its value was increasing year by year, in my mind there ran the thought, Truly it is a most valuable commodity! Why, it is one which gives seats in the Legislative Council—£200 a year, and the title of "Honorable." Then I thought, in my own mind, Surely that land which gives such things will bring a great price ultimately in the market. Now, follow this out. Enormous changes have been made in all these colonies. In my youth the Governors were bound by the same law as Cæsar. They dared not pass the Rubicon—that is, the boundary of their province. That was put into their Commission. Now the Governors are allowed to pass from colony to colony; they are allowed to meet; and they are allowed to come to decisions such as, "We Governors will not grant a dissolution until we have exhausted the House." Why, this is to create a great and a new power in these colonies which ought not to exist. I say that no Governor ought to be allowed to move out of his own colony; nor ought Governors to be allowed to advise one another as to what they will do in their respective colonies. It is absolutely wrong, altogether wrong. Look at another thing. I heard many people express pleasure when Lord Carnarvon arranged that his cousin, Mr. Herbert, should be taken into the Colonial Office and made Principal Under Secretary of State. Now, the Principal Under Secretary of State is virtually the Go-

vernor of the British Colonies, because he directs all the Governors. It was said that it would be an immense advantage to the colonies that a colonial statesman from Queensland should be taken in that way into the Colonial Department. I regretted it as a great misfortune, and as one step in the wrong direction I am speaking of. Why, he was, and long had been, the representative of the great landed aristocracy of Queensland, and he was put into the Colonial Office virtually to carry out that landed system. Now, I say it would have been infinitely better for us if a man of great ability and of great probity had been taken who knew nothing whatever of these colonies, who would not work with any party in the colonial possessions of the Crown, and who would let the colonists rule and govern themselves, and depend upon themselves. Then, look at all those new titles which have been granted. They are all in the same direction. Was such a thing ever heard of before as that an exterior governing power should interfere in the internal affairs of a community such as this? Virtually it is the Agent-General or some such person who at the present moment confers orders of knighthood upon people in New Zealand for public services rendered here, without Ministers being consulted; and the Governor and Secretary of State correspond directly with the gentlemen to whom those honors are to be given, without the Advisers of the Crown knowing that such correspondence has taken place except through the newspapers. It is all a march in the same direction—a march hateful to my mind in itself, and pernicious in the extreme to the interests of this country. I have been so forcibly impressed with the idea that lately this thought has come to my mind: that, in 1853, in having the Constitution Act prepared, I took care it was so prepared that the inhabitants of New Zealand might at any time make a law for themselves in which they might determine in what manner their own Governor is to be chosen. For a long time it was doubted and contested whether that was the effect of the law or not; but I was certain that it was so from the care with which I had drawn the words. Now, the Home Government admit that I am right—that the people of New Zealand have the power of making a law determining the way in which their own Governor is to be chosen; and, having had this confession unwillingly extorted from them, they add that I am to be told that the Queen has the power of disallowing the Act if she does not like it. Why, of course we know that the Crown can disallow any law; but we equally know that the Queen could never disallow such a law if made here. It is not the custom of monarchy in modern times that such a thing should be done. I believe I shall yet live to receive from the people of New Zealand thanks that I was so careful so many years ago as to have secured a privilege for them which the necessities of the time and what has now taken place will call upon them to exercise. I contend that every one of the reasons I have urged shows the necessity for our following the course which the honorable member for Port Chalmers has said will be taken. I am now one of the rank-and-file of the party.

I will stand by him to the last in that determination. I am sure that we shall triumph in the course we are entering upon. I am certain that the end we aim at is judicious and right, and I am satisfied that no single member of the great Liberal party which has arisen in this House will flinch in the contest which is coming. I have seen that Liberal party grow from three or four members to become a great power in the country. I have seen it increase until it is now a majority of this House, and until those honorable gentlemen on the Government benches strive to prove their Liberalism to retain power. That is the case now with the honorable gentleman who says "No," and hides himself in a corner, whence a voice comes out—a voice we well know, but little heed. Now, Sir, the question is this: Are we the representatives of the people of New Zealand? Shall we allow any person to dictate to us as to who our Prime Minister is to be? Shall we allow any interference on the part of another Chamber in sending their members here? I say we ought to make a stand against that. I say a law should be introduced which would prevent such a thing being ever repeated again as has been now done a second time in this colony. One such occurrence might be forgiven, because it might be concluded that an honorable gentleman leaving the Legislative Council once had really abandoned it, and had no intention of returning; but I say that a man who twice contracts with his Sovereign, "I accept from you the office for life," binds the Queen to maintain him there for life. If he resigns in this manner, there is no mutuality of contract between them; and I say it is unfair. Considered by every rule of right, to do such a thing twice is a wrong act, which should call a blush to the man's cheek who has done it. I say it is an absolute breach of contract with the Sovereign, which ought not to be allowed. Now, what chance have we if such things can be done, assuming that a Governor chooses to take an interest in some special side in the country, and with a nominated Upper House absolutely opposed to us? We have very few friends in it: they could all be numbered on the fingers of one hand. That House mixes up with us in our lobbies and other rooms, with the power of interfering and lobbying, and using various means to draw members to their side. Then, besides those two exterior forces acting against the great party which is a majority of this House, we have here a strong minority to contend against. Nothing but perfect unanimity upon our part can give us the victory, or can secure that the measures necessary for this country will really be carried to completion. Although, as I have said in this House, there can be no halting now, and that the measures must be of the most liberal kind, who can tell what will befall them in another Chamber? Who can foretell that? I say that nothing but a determination on our part to fight every force that we may find opposed to us—a determination to conquer or perish in the struggle—can yet lead us triumphantly through. I have heard to-day many rumours which I really think are not without foundation. It is said that, after the Imprest Supply Bill is passed to-morrow, a dissolution will be given.

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Honorable gentlemen on the other side of the House may laugh, but I am certain that has been considered. I am certain, from what I have heard, that it has been considered. What decision may have been come to I cannot say; but I would not trust the honorable gentlemen with the money. I say it would be a cruel thing to New Zealand to allow a dissolution. We have those honorable gentlemen's noses to the grindstone, and we must keep them there. There must be no escape now—no room to get away from the promises given—the democratic measures they have promised. We must take care that the means of obtaining a dissolution are not intrusted to them now, until the measures we have at heart are absolutely passed. If we do this, we shall triumph. If we do this, we shall see voting for these measures the very gentlemen who have for years voted against them. I see one—the honorable member for Aron, I believe—who has voted against the Triennial Parliaments Bill always. I should be sorry to make a mistake, but I have looked into *Hansard*, and find what I say is the case. I find that other members have done the same thing.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The honorable member for Port Chalmers.

Mr. MACANDREW.—That was five years ago.

Sir G. GREY.—I was going to say I should be glad to see them come into the House clad in white sheets, as penitents. I am sure the honorable member for Port Chalmers would look well in that attire. I should like to see them as penitents, clad in white, going into the lobbies. This I am quite certain of: that now we shall get those measures in a more liberal form than I ever hoped to see. I can feel satisfied that I have rebutted one of the slanders I have heard uttered in this House. I heard an honorable gentleman say, with regard to myself, the other evening, and with regard to a measure, that "it was just such a Bill as he would have expected to have emanated from Sir George Grey." The honorable gentleman says "Hear, hear;" but I have given a complete and triumphant answer to that. I had once the power of legislating myself. I had once the power so far to legislate that I could recommend to the British Parliament an Act to pass. And what was passed? A Constitution Act. There was read out the other night an admission of the Secretary of State that in all respects but one that measure was passed as it came framed from my hand; and that one alteration was a blot upon it. I can say this, in reply to the cruel taunt that was made the other night: "There! look! I once had the power of making a law, and there it is." Here I have been trammelled and thwarted in every possible way and could not freely introduce Bills; but without unduly boasting I can say, with regard to that Act, "Exegi monumentum aere perennius."

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Sir, I am very sorry the honorable gentleman who has just sat down has on this occasion, as on many others, watched very carefully, so that a more able speaker whom he was going to attack had lost the chance of replying before he himself got up to attack him. I regret very much that my honorable colleague the

Premier was not able to answer the speech which the honorable gentleman has just made. I feel very strongly, as any honorable member must feel, that it requires a remarkably good speaker to do justice to himself when following the honorable gentleman. There was a time when I listened with pleasure to that honorable gentleman; there was a time when I thought that there was a true ring in his voice; there was a time when I thought that he had the interests of the people at heart—that he had sympathy with the wrongs and sufferings of humanity: and, although I thought he talked a little too much about them, yet I felt at one time that he was a man we might be proud to have among us. I confess that my opinion has undergone an entire change. I am satisfied, from the way the House sat and listened to the declamatory speech we have just heard, that the House has come to the same conclusion as myself. I am sure, from what I have seen in the country, that the people are tired of the cant that falls from that honorable member on every occasion he gets up to speak. We have been accustomed, from the position he has held in the colony, from respect for his years, from respect for his abilities—which are great—I say we have been accustomed to sit and listen to what would not be tolerated from any other member of this House. We have been told that we who sit on these benches are yearning for place and power; that we have no desire beyond that. I think the House of Representatives, which has placed us here, will resent such a statement as an insult to itself. Are members who, after a division in this House, take up the position of Ministers of the Crown—are they to be told, almost before they have got on these benches, that they are yearning for pelf and power? It is an insult to the position that any man in this country ought to look up to with laudable ambition, and which ought to be only held by men who respect the position, and who respect themselves. Are we to be told that we are tied to the chariot-wheels of the honorable gentleman? He gave a very significant intimation to this House of what will happen if he gets his wicked way in respect to the present political crisis. He is going to form a flying column—he is going to dictate to the Ministry that may be in power the policy of the country. There is going to be a third party—a power without responsibility, without place, and without respect for the will of the people as represented by a majority in this House. We shall have that honorable gentleman, without place or responsibility, influencing most prejudicially our deliberations. He tells us that he will move an address from the House to His Excellency the Governor, asking him to remove his friends from these benches. I appeal to this House to consider what that means. We who sit on these benches will defend the honor of the Crown while we remain here. We will not do as the honorable gentleman has done during the past two years—drag the representative of the Crown on the floor of this House; we will not do as he has done—bring an absent gentleman on to the floor of this House, and talk

disparagingly of him behind his back, after being sworn to defend him. If we happen to differ from the Governor, we know our constitutional position to be this: It is to resign when we differ, and when that difference is thoroughly established. That is the constitutional position of Ministers: nobody knows that better than the honorable gentleman himself. He knows that when responsible government was first introduced here, much against his will, and with the very greatest difficulty, the first duty of the Ministers was to insist on obtaining in writing from him an assurance of the course that he, as Governor, would take. A Minister came down and told this House: We will not hold our seats on these benches and differ from the Governor of the colony; we are quite sure that, sooner or later, pressure will be brought to bear upon a Governor who ventures to disregard the popular will. Well, that was the position of that honorable gentleman. We are quite sure that the popular pressure that will be brought to bear upon a Governor who neglects the popular will, can only be properly brought to bear by Ministers resigning from time to time. If they continue to do that, sooner or later the Governor will be beaten. What have we had here? We have had that honorable gentleman, sworn to advise the Crown, sworn to deal loyally by its representative—we have had him flinging the name of the Governor before us, and subjecting him to contumely and insults in the presence of the representatives of the people. The honorable gentleman has done more in the past two years to make responsible government, upon which the liberties of the people at large depend, hateful and distasteful in the eyes of the colonists generally than I could have believed possible to have been done in so short a time. He knows perfectly well that according to all constitutional practice it is an improper thing for a Minister of the Crown, or for one who has recently held that position, to refer to what has passed between him and the Governor in his constitutional relations. Yet he has come down here and has made an attack upon the Governor, and has said that he has done things that neither the Governor nor the House has any opportunity of forming any judgment upon. The honorable member went on to speak of the constitutional position. He said what he has said before, and what, it appears to me, he will state a great many times again, to be rebutted as often. He said that when my honorable friend carried the resolution which he did carry in this House—"That this House had no confidence in the Ministry as at present constituted"—he was bound to reconstruct the existing Ministry or to tender his resignation to the Governor. Now, it is well known that there were a certain number of honorable members in the party at the time—not many—who believed that a reconstruction was necessary, and that that was the most feasible course to be taken. It was in deference to their wishes that the resolution was so framed. But, as is ordinarily the case, a party working together has to sink its individual opinions when it becomes impossible to carry out those opinions. Well, what was the position

of the case? My honorable friend brought down his resolution. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) was then on the benches here; and he distinctly stated from these benches, in unmistakable terms, that they would accept no terms—accept of no coalition whatever—accept of no reconstruction. Every honorable member in this House who voted for that resolution did so with his eyes open to the fact that no coalition or reconstruction would be permitted. Sir, they knew that thoroughly, and it is simply misleading to say that is not the case. Well, Sir, I come to what the honorable gentleman says this Government has been formed for. It has been formed, he says, to promote particular views; it has been formed to create a great landed aristocracy; it has been formed to continue a body of men in power who have made it the business of their lives to grasp the public lands. And then, he adds to this declaration—as he does when he makes any proposition more monstrous than he has made before: he says, “That is the case, Sir.” Well, Sir, I say it is not the case. Who are the members of the present Government? Am I one of the landed aristocracy? Have I no popular sympathies? I should like to see the honorable gentleman come down and contest an election with me among my own people. The honorable member here—in this House—challenged me to go and meet him before my own people. I did so. I went into a very great crush, at the imminent risk of my life—it was very doubtful whether I should ever come out alive again—ou purpose to give him an opportunity of attacking me. He dared not do it before my own people. That was at Christchurch. I met him the next day, and told him I was going to another meeting of his, to give him an opportunity of meeting me before my own people. This was at Lyttelton. I went there. I waited to see him there. He knew I was present. I went in the train with him, and was desirous of giving him an opportunity of attacking me. He knew perfectly well that the moment he attacked me he would have the whole meeting down upon him, and he dared not do it. Well, Sir, in an ill-advised moment some injudicious gentleman, who thought he was promoting the great Liberal cause, ventured to bring me up to the meeting and to demand that I should be heard. I was heard; and what did the honorable gentleman say? He said, “I have a great respect for my friend. I always had a great respect for him. I wish he was working on my side. When I find him supporting my measures, he will have no better or stronger friend than I am.” Sir, here we are. We have brought these Bills down. I claim his promise. They are not only far more liberal than his Bills, but they are plain and comprehensible. They are better Bills altogether; and, what is more, they will pass. We do not want the honorable member to be dragging semi-liberal and pseudo-liberal measures before the people, and holding them up as a class cry for the future. We want to see this question disposed of; and disposed of it shall be. We shall deprive the honorable gentleman of that pleasure which he derives from slandering his neighbours and raising class cries

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throughout the country. We shall pass these liberal measures. He has told us—and I think this House lies under a very grave imputation—that this House has members in it who have been pledging themselves to vote on his side on condition that he would support iniquitous grants of land—40,000 acres, I think—as the price of a vote in this House. Let us have that honorable gentleman up here; let us know who he is. I say it is a gross slander, and I dare him to name the honorable gentleman. I say he is bound as a gentleman, he is bound as a member of this House, and he is bound as a man who has any regard for a shred of political reputation such as that which is left to him, to do that. He spoke just now of Cheviot. Who made the County of Cheviot a great sheep-walk? Who signed away those Native lands—the Whakatane grants—16,000 acres of land at threepence an acre? Why, that honorable gentleman's Ministry. I challenge the honorable gentleman to bring that case before me. I hold at present the portfolio of Minister of Lands. There shall be no transaction done that either he or any other member may not see in my office. This Ministry will do no such thing as sign away public lands or lands of Natives in the manner they were signed away by the last Government. Then, Sir, the honorable gentleman went on to attack my honorable colleague the Premier, who I do not suppose cared very much what he said about him. He went on to attack that honorable gentleman on the question of his leaving the Upper House. Really, I feel amazed at that being made a subject of attack. The honorable gentleman has left a comparatively easy position, and has come down here to do his duty as a citizen of this country, and is doing it. I do not think that requires any apology. Is the law against it? What does the Constitution Act—*that monumentum aere perennius*—say?—

“It shall be lawful for any member of the said Legislative Council, by writing under his hand addressed to the Governor, to resign his seat in the said Council; and, upon such resignation and acceptance thereof by the Governor, the seat of such member shall become vacant.”

Well, Sir, what is the case? The honorable member says my honorable colleague has been doing this twice: that, in the first instance, he resigned his seat in the Council in the year 1867. The honorable gentleman was Governor of the colony then, and he accepted my honorable friend's resignation without a murmur. He never said a syllable about the great wrong that was being done to the Constitution of which he was the author. There was no impropriety in it then.

Sir G. GREY.—I should like to make a personal explanation. I would simply point out that when the honorable gentleman first resigned his seat there was no knowledge that he was to go into the House of Representatives.

Mr. HALL.—I had, one month before I resigned my seat, addressed the electors of Heathcote.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—The honorable gentleman says that the Upper House has sent my honor-

able friend here. I take it, it is not the Upper House that sent him, but one of the most important constituencies in the colony. There is not a constituency in the colony that would not be proud of him. There is not a constituency in the colony that does not believe him, when he says a thing. I wish I could say the same of the honorable gentleman. The insincerity of the honorable gentleman has become a proverb and a by-word in the country. Take those papers I laid on the table the other day with regard to immigration. I feel ashamed, as a public man, that such a fraud upon the public should have been perpetrated as was committed by the honorable gentleman. What did he tell that great meeting at Christchurch, which I attended at much personal inconvenience? He said that the immigration that was going on was at the dictation of the great landholders, who were pestering him to bring in people, in order to cheapen labour and increase the value of their estates at the expense of the working-man. What was the honorable gentleman doing at that very moment? What sort of conscience, what sort of heart, what sort of head could he have? What had he in his right hand when he was saying that? Sir, I feel ashamed of him, as a public man. I feel ashamed of him in every possible way. He at that time knew not only that the immigration which was then going on ought not to be going on—considering the bad harvest and other circumstances which he ought to have taken into consideration—but that he had sent Home a request that six thousand additional immigrants might be poured in. What can we think of a man who would venture to speak to his fellow-men, and to deceive them in such a gross manner as that? The honorable gentleman's insincerity has become a by-word. There was a time when I respected him. I have no respect for him now.

Sir G. GREY.—May I be allowed to make a personal explanation?

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the member speaking gives way, you may do so; but, if not, you must wait until the honorable gentleman has concluded his speech.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Sir, I am not an adept at speaking; I must ask the House to indulge me. I should give way, but I have not that power of speech the honorable gentleman has, and I must ask him to reserve any personal explanation he may have to make until afterwards. He tells us that the Governor accepted my honorable colleague's resignation as a member of the Legislative Council without advice. I say he had no right to tell the House that. He knows that it was perfectly unconstitutional to make that statement to the House. Whether it is true or not I do not know. He said, as usual, "That is the case;" and I have my doubts about it. He says the Ministry must represent this House. The Ministry has no reason to suppose, at the present time, that it does not represent the House—no reason whatever; and, until it is shown to the contrary, we are in that position that we have a right to presume that we have the confidence of the House, and we shall act upon that presumption. The honorable gentleman said, "What is

it that gives seats in the Legislative Council? Land, Sir"—this "dull, insensate land," he has spoken of to the crowds in his tour. Dull, insensate land gives seats in the Legislative Council! I imagine, Sir, from what we have seen in the *Gazettes* during the last two years, that the honorable gentleman himself has been giving seats, not land. I do not wish to make any comment on those appointments, but I should like to say this, with regard to the Legislative Council: that I hope the time will not come when any ridiculous cry will lead this House to give up the power that it now has over the constitution of that Council through Responsible Ministers. Then we have this other idea. When we have done with this popular representation—when these Bills are passed which are to enfranchise sixty thousand serfs—when that cry is done, we are going to have, if you please, the cry of "Elective Governors." God forbid, say I. Sir, this country does not want any more of these cries. We have got plenty before us. Whatever may be our fate, we shall certainly respect the deliberate decision of this House when it has had a fair opportunity of forming its judgment upon us. The honorable gentleman says a dissolution has been considered. I do not know anything about a dissolution at all. I know of nothing but that we sit here on these benches, that we are going to show the country that we are in earnest about liberal measures, and we are going to show the country what its true position is. A seat on these benches is no easy place; I cannot think that any man would take one except under a sense of duty; and I say this: that whoever comes here will have a most onerous duty under such a state of things as was revealed last night in regard to our finances and to Native affairs. Those are burning questions. The question of whether my honorable friend ventured to come down from the Upper House to serve his country in the Lower Chamber is not one which will agitate the public mind. The burning questions that are coming on are in consequence of the gross maladministration that has taken place during the past two years. I say that deliberately. I myself have no desire for office any more than my honorable friends who sit near me. We will do our duty, as we have in other times. No Ministry will sit long on these benches in future that does not do its duty in a very different way from the manner in which the duty of government has been performed during the past two years. I say that with some knowledge and experience of public work; and I say it after a week's experience that has failed altogether in overtaking the arrears of work in the offices as they now exist. Now, Sir, with regard to the proposal for stonewalling: We have now got, from the great Proconsul—from this man who would fain lead us to believe that the eyes of the world, as well as of New Zealand, are upon him—the information that he is coming into the House of Parliament to "stone-wall." I ask the country and the House to see what that means. Surely we have had degradation enough, without allowing ourselves to be dragged through the dirt in that way. I hope the good sense of this House, and regard for its true

dignity, will determine honorable members upon the adoption of a more dignified course than that. What act was ever done that will meet with more general reprobation than that done by the honorable member for Port Chalmers, who, before my honorable friend the Premier had actually formed his Ministry, announced from his place on these benches his intention to move a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry? That, I think, is one of the most discreditable things that have ever taken place in the history of parliamentary government. I have now nothing more to say. I have only got to assure this House that they have nothing to fear from us in the way of sticking to office. We can handsomely afford to take no notice of such slanders as the tongue of the honorable member for the Thames seems most fitted to utter. We can afford to pass by such slanders as that we are holding these benches for pelf or power. I am here as a member of the House of some years' standing, and I assure the House that we will neither slander members of this House nor degrade the benches we hold by dragging the Crown through the dirt; neither shall we disregard the deliberate opinion of this House, when it has had proper and ample means of forming a judgment upon us.

Mr. REID.—I feel some hesitation in following such able and experienced speakers as those who have preceded me; yet I also feel that some remarks have fallen from the honorable member who has just sat down which should not be allowed to pass unrefuted. The speech which we have just listened to is very similar to a number of speeches delivered in this House during last session, and the present session also, and which consist of nothing but a tirade of abuse upon Sir George Grey. I have had an opportunity of listening to these speeches, and of witnessing the opening of the mud-batteries from the Opposition last session; and now we are to be treated in a similar way by the present Ministry. I rise to support the motion which has been tabled by the honorable member for Port Chalmers, and I think we who are in the Opposition are driven to take this course to prevent the Ministry advancing one step; and the fault lies with themselves. I regret that so much time has been lost, and I feel certain the country is not satisfied with the conduct of this House in wasting so much time; but, as I have just said, it is entirely owing to the action taken by the Ministerial party. Ministers know perfectly well that they have not a majority in this House. They are perfectly conscious of it, and mean to throw every obstacle in the way of our showing that we have the majority of the House against them. I hear the Hon. the Premier laugh, but I challenge him. The Premier—

Mr. HALL.—I did not laugh.

Mr. REID.—I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. The honorable member who laughed is very near the Premier; but I challenge him or any other member on those benches to come to a division this night. We are prepared to come to a division, and are waiting anxiously for them to say when they are prepared to meet that vote of want of confidence. For several days past the

Premier would give no reply, merely stating that he would take that vote at a reasonable time. Now, after being pressed into a corner, he would grant a hearing of this motion on Tuesday next, but not sooner. Now, is it reasonable that we should have to wait here another week talking in this way against time, as it were, for the purpose of giving the Premier an opportunity of searching through those pigeon-holes for some more charges against the late Government? The honorable member for Avon has just disposed, as he imagines, of Sir George Grey. We heard a great deal of abuse of Sir George Grey last session. We hear a little more this session. We who came here to support the Grey Ministry and Liberal measures were stigmatized as young "Grey-hounds." I do not know in what way we are entitled to be so stigmatized, except on the ground that we have hunted the old Fox from the fold, and are now called upon to watch after the rats that are likely to infest it. The honorable member for Napier (Mr. Sutton), I think this afternoon, made a remark which took me somewhat aback. He said that, even if the Opposition turned out the Ministry, he did not think in the Opposition ranks there were members competent to form a new Ministry. Now, the whole of this discussion has come down to a question of men and not measures, and I venture to say that we have in the Opposition men who will as creditably fill the Treasury benches as those who are now seated there. I ask, looking at the old leader of the party, where is the one we can pick out from the other side to put on the same platform with Sir George Grey? He is a gentleman who does not require that any young member should advocate his cause or say one word in his favour. His name is stamped on the colony. He is a man who has been the chosen associate of the greatest and best men this century has produced—a man well versed in science, in literature, in arms, in discovery, in government, in philanthropy; and in his knowledge of the constitutional laws of this country, and his acquaintance with every part and parcel of this land we live in, he stands unequalled by any man in this House. And that is the gentleman whom they are now stigmatizing, and have been stigmatizing for the last six or eight months. Why, the honorable member for Avon challenged Sir George Grey to go and contest the election with him in his small constituency. What did the late Premier do? Did he not go to a larger constituency than was ever represented by the honorable member for Avon?—and there he contested successfully, and was placed at the head of the poll in a large constituency to which he was a perfect stranger. The honorable member for Avon represents some 825 electors altogether, over the age of twenty-one years—a mere pocket-borough as compared with the City of Christchurch. And the late Premier goes to Christchurch, and is returned at the head of the poll; and I venture to say that, if he went to any constituency in New Zealand, he would meet with equal success.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Let him try Cheviot.

Mr. REID.—I do not mean to pick out mem-

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bers from the Opposition ranks and compare them with those on the Ministerial benches, but I think we have in the Opposition gentlemen who have had greater experience—whose lives and experience fit them for a position on those benches in preference to those who are now occupying them. The honorable member who leads the Opposition is a gentleman who has spent his whole lifetime for the benefit of this country, and I think there is no one on those benches who can appear more favourably in the eyes of the country than that gentleman. Now, I will go further and say that the honorable member for Port Chalmers is justified in taking this course, because the Ministers will not give way, and will use every step that they possibly can to stave off the voice of Parliament. They not only do not represent the majority in this House, but never did represent the majority of the country. I have gone to the trouble of taking out the figures from a return recently laid on the table of this House—but it would take too long a time to give all the particulars—showing most distinctly that the Ministerial party have never, even in the late division, represented a majority of the electors in this colony. I will say this much, however: Taking out the total figures represented at the last division, those who voted in favour of the Grey Ministry represented 21,297 electors where elections were contested, while those who were returned unopposed represented 13,259 voters. The Opposition votes represented 19,092 votes where the elections were contested, and 3,175 where the elections were not contested: so that the Grey Government, though in a minority of two, represented 34,556 voters as against 22,267 on the other side.

HON. MEMBERS.—No, no.

MR. REID.—I have the figures here in detail, and am prepared to give them if necessary. Now we come to the present Ministry, and I ask, are they a fair representation of the people? Why, the Premier did not contest an election at all. He represents a district where there are only 948 electors over twenty-one years of age. The honorable member for Avon did not contest an election at all, and he only represents 825 electors.

MR. HALL.—They could not get anybody to oppose them, though they tried very hard.

MR. REID.—The honorable member for Avon only represents 825 voters—not so many as four members from the West Coast each represent. The Hon. the Minister for Public Works certainly polled more votes than any other member of the Government; but he happened to be second on the poll. Why the first on the poll should be passed over, and the second selected, they can themselves best explain. The Native Minister polled 569 votes, and the Colonial Treasurer the small number of 322 votes. Then, added to the list, comes the honorable member of the Ministry who was called to the Upper House, and who was actually rejected by the constituency he stood for. Sir George Grey was returned for the Thames unopposed, and represented 4,446 electors. He contested the election in Christchurch City, and polled 1,815 votes. There is a com-

parison! If you compare that list with the list relating to those who voted against the Grey Ministry, you will find that, whether in point of population or by the number of votes recorded for each member, the Ministerial party as it now stands represents a minority of the country. Taking the population, and looking at the success of the late elections, I find that in Taranaki, where there is only a male adult population of 2,500, three members were returned who are supporters of the present Government. It is observable that in all the small places they could get a majority, but in all the large centres of population they were fairly in the back-ground. In Hawke's Bay, with a male adult population of 4,585, they secured three members; in Marlborough, where there is a population of 1,889, they got two members; but when we come to Auckland, with a population of 21,798, and Otago, with a population of 31,551, what do we find there? In Auckland the Grey Ministry got fifteen members against two. In Otago they got twelve members as against nine who are supporting the present Ministry. I will add a word or two with reference to the district I represent, and the reason why we from the West Coast should support those who are likely to be the successors of the present Ministry. I say that the Grey Government have done more for the West Coast in the last two years than the previous Government did in six or eight years before. They have given us water-races and bridges, and they have supported our County Councils, Borough Councils, and hospitals in a manner in which they were never supported before. The West Coast, which contributes largely to the revenue of the colony, has never, until the last three months, had a direct voice in the Ministry of the colony. The necessity of appointing a Minister of Mines has never been recognized until the last few months, and it is the duty of the West Coast to support a Government in which a Minister of Mines is appointed. I am sorry to say that the whole of the West Coast members are not unanimous in opposing the present Government. I regret to find that one member has deserted his party, and voted contrary to the pledges given to his constituents before coming to this House. Enough has been said upon that matter without my saying any more about it; but to those honorable members who gave me a contradictory "No" I would say that, although a great deal has been said about a corrupt Press, I cannot believe that four newspapers, the *Grey River Argus*, the *Greymouth Star*, the *Inangahua Times*, and the *Inangahua Herald*, have all misrepresented that gentleman. I cannot believe that they have all put words into his mouth and made him say, "I am a supporter of the Grey Ministry." I regret to have to speak in this way of a gentleman I have respected for many years; but it is nevertheless the fact that he has deserted his party, and is now sailing under false colours. He began his canvass as an independent Liberal, as he called himself, but he found the feeling of the people so strong that he most distinctly pledged himself as a Grey supporter. In conclusion, I may say that I heartily indorse the action

taken by the honorable member for Port Chalmers. It is a pity that such a course should have to be adopted, but we are driven to it; and I hope that, having unfurled his flag, he will stick to his colours, and carry on the fight every day until the Government consent to discuss the want-of-confidence motion.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—In answer to the remarks of the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Reid), perhaps I may be allowed to refer to what took place on a previous occasion, when another honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) referred to the action of the honorable member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters). It was then stated that the honorable gentleman had broken his election pledges; and I appeal to the House to say whether the honorable gentleman did not completely prove by extracts read in our presence that the charges were a perfect mare's-nest. The honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Reid) also referred to the great statesmanship and world-wide renown of the honorable member for the Thames. Now, I should like to say one word upon that subject—not in disparagement of the honorable member for the Thames, or of the position, high or low, which he has attained in the colonial world; but I would remind the honorable gentleman that there were two Sir George Greys. The one was a great statesman, known throughout the world as a Secretary of State under various Governments of Great Britain, a man respected by all, a man who was a Liberal to the backbone, a man who, from the evil days before the Reform Bill till his death, stood in the foremost ranks of the Liberal party; and there is another Sir George Grey, a member of this House, who is very well known and respected, but who is at the same time not a man of world-wide reputation. At Home he is utterly unknown outside official circles. I say that deliberately, and I will repeat it, in spite of any "Oh, oh," that may be uttered. There is no man in this House who has followed the political world of Great Britain in the general tenor of its progress more closely than I have done, and I venture to say that the name of the honorable gentleman is entirely unknown outside official circles. Therefore, when he is quoted in this House as a great statesman, and when his opinions are referred to as those of a great statesman, I say it is the result of gross ignorance of what is going on in the political world. Then the honorable member for Hokitika referred to some figures to indicate the position of members, as shown by the number of votes cast at the last elections. I, unfortunately, am not prepared to go into that matter in full, but I apprehend that before this debate is over some honorable gentleman will give the true figures, which will show that in this matter he is as much mistaken as he is in other matters. I will take one case he referred to—namely, the votes cast in the Provincial District of Taranaki, where he says there are so many people, and he no doubt gives the sitting members credit for the number of votes they polled. Now, what is the fact in regard to Taranaki? Why, that the Ministerial organs, the Ministerial agents—I do not

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mean paid or official agents, but persons who were there in the Grey interest—were utterly unable to find any one to contest the seats. The gentleman who opposed me said he was opposed to Sir George Grey personally. But let me mention one or two curious coincidences that happened in one of the constituencies. In the constituency of Egmont there was a prospect of a triangular fight. There were two gentlemen who, from some quarter or another not in the district, were put forward to oppose the honorable gentleman who at present represents the constituency of Egmont. One of them suddenly disappeared from the scene. He went to Wellington, and when he came back he had in his pocket a promise of a loan of £10,000. Another, who had for several years been refused an honor that was much coveted, was made a Justice of the Peace. In addition to that, he has got a contract without tendering for it for supplying the force of the district with rations, and the right of establishing canteens in every district. Now, Sir, it is a curious coincidence that these things occurred to the persons who were put forward to oppose the honorable member for Egmont at the last election. And I would like those honorable gentlemen who are so clever at throwing aspersions on the true Liberals of this House to put these things quietly beside each other and consider their significance. We are told that our friends on the Treasury benches are in a false position—in a position that was never intended—because the resolution that was passed by this House was not of a sufficiently definite nature—that, in fact, it was not a new Ministry that was wanted, but a reconstruction of the old; and it was said that no effort was made by the Prime Minister to carry out the wish of the House. Sir, do the honorable gentlemen forget that these words were used by one of the most trusted Ministers of the party then in power: "If we are beaten, honorable members of the Opposition will be left to select members from their own side: coalition, I say, is not only impossible, but unfair and dishonest"?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman is not in order in referring to a previous debate.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Then I will not refer to this speech further than to point out, in general terms, the fact that those honorable gentlemen, one and all, maintained that they would stand or fall together; and therefore my honorable friend the Premier cannot be twitted because he did not go to them, after they had repudiated the idea of coalition, and try and construct a Ministry out of his own friends along with theirs. The honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) is not always very accurate, as we know, in his reports. Of course, if he would only give the House the exact words used, we might form our own opinion as to their meaning; but when he attempts to paraphrase, as we have lately seen,—and the instance is not by any means new,—we know how matters may be twisted so as not to look like the same thing. He professed to explain what were the duties of members of the Upper House. He says, in regard to what he calls the landed interests of the country, that there is one great advantage attached to their

position, and it is this: that £200 a year for life can be given to them—that is a sort of pension that is given to them—and that they have no corresponding duties. I would just remark upon this, first of all, that, if it is desirable to discuss the constitution of the Upper House, I think it ought to be done in a regular way, and not by a side-wind: we ought not to have these side-hits, but the whole question ought to come on for discussion in a fair manner, so that everything might be said and discussed in a fair, full, and clear way. But, supposing it to be true that the honorable gentlemen to whom he referred receive £200 without having any corresponding duties, I would ask, Who, in the history of the country, has passed so many members into that House—who has created so many pensioners at £200 a year for life as the honorable gentleman has done? Was it done to bring that House into contempt? Was it to imperil its existence that he sent so many members into it? Was it in order that he might know for certain the kind of people he was going to attack in this way that he filled the House with his own nominees? Why, very respect for the men he sent there ought to prevent him making attacks upon the character of that House. Then he goes on to refer to the Governor, and, in a strange, indecent way, drags the Governor day after day, time after time, discussion after discussion, upon the floor of this House. I take it that no man who is absent ought to be attacked in this manner; and, at any rate, that it is quite improper to attack the Governor, who is only known to this House by the action and conduct of his Ministry. I say he ought not to be criticised in this way. It is a singular fact that this honorable gentleman, Sir George Grey, quarrels with all Governors; and I apprehend it is not owing to the personal qualities of the men, but to the fact that they hold an office which he wishes to be elective, in the hope that he may be elected to the position himself.—(Oh!)—That is the talk even amongst members on his own side: it is no new thing; and therefore I think I am perfectly justified in inferring that such was the motive which influenced his conduct. Then the honorable gentleman went on to attribute motives for the action of some of the gentlemen who had spoken in the House during this morning's sitting. I at once challenged him, as I was one of the speakers, to say who it was to whom he referred; but no satisfactory answer could be got from him. He had no right to say that 40,000 acres of land had been taken as a bribe, in order that a certain course might be pursued. To impute such conduct as that to any member of this House is to cast an imputation upon that man's honor, and therefore upon the honor of this House, and, if true, such conduct ought to be stigmatized in such a manner that it would never occur again. But the honorable gentleman throws charges broadcast over the country, yet takes no steps to establish them. I do not like to say he knows those charges to be untrue—he may have believed the information given to him—but, in any case, whether they be true or false, he ought to place

the individual who has had such an aspersion cast upon his character in such a position that he can either exculpate himself or deny the charge. Now, it has been said we have been quoting precedents which are inapplicable to the condition of this country. It is very true that one precedent which was quoted by an honorable member for one of the Auckland constituencies is of an old date, and does not entirely apply to the case under consideration here; but the cases to which I have referred, and to which you will perhaps allow me to refer again, are of a late date, and are to a certain extent instructive to the House. On one occasion a Ministry at Home was defeated by a majority of five, and at once, feeling that it was not in a position to conduct satisfactorily the affairs of the country, the Government resigned and gave place to their opponents. That opposing party was left to endeavour to form a Ministry. I refer to the year 1839, and the Ministry which resigned was that of the late Lord Melbourne; and Sir Robert Peel was at once sent for. He was unable, owing to the peculiar circumstances, to form a Ministry—it was at the time of the dispute in reference to the right of appointments to the Queen's household—so the preceding Ministry came into power again. There was a dissolution of Parliament owing to the defeat of the Ministry of Lord Melbourne by a majority of one on the 4th of June, 1841; and, when the new Parliament was called into existence and met on the 28th of August, 1841, Lord Melbourne's Ministry was defeated—that is to say, on the Saturday—and on the Monday, at the forenoon sitting, the announcement of the resignation was made to the House. That shows it was then considered absolutely essential that, as soon as it was shown that a Premier had not the confidence of the House, he should at once resign. And in numerous cases, a list of which I hold in my hand, stretching over a hundred years, there is no case where that course was not immediately pursued. Upon some occasions they went so far as this: A Ministry was defeated at two o'clock in the morning, and it was announced at the early sitting of the same day that the Ministry had resigned; and I apprehend that would be the case if constitutional government were honestly and faithfully carried out in a new country. It is a precedent which it would be very good for us to follow. It is a precedent which I believe the late Ministry ought to have followed; but it is a precedent which they did not follow. There was a case in point when Lord Derby came into power in 1866. That was rather a peculiar case. Lord Russell was defeated by the small majority of eleven in a House of 619 members, and then upon a question which was by most of his friends not considered one of principle. The Queen was absent from London at the time, and he at once telegraphed his resignation; but she desired there should be no resignation until she returned to London, and that occupied a week. But from day to day the House adjourned, in order that the Ministry might keep the country *au fait* as to what was going on. On that occasion, although there was a clear majority against Lord Derby's Government, a majority representing something like two to one,

certainly exceeding three to two, yet, owing to the fact that the Russell Ministry was turned out of office by the miserably narrow majority of eleven, it was considered only fair that the Derby Ministry should get a fair and clear hearing; and they went on from that time, June, 1866, until autumn, 1868, when the dissolution came, they in the meantime carrying on the affairs of the country to the satisfaction, in a general way, of the parties concerned; and yet at this time there were questions of the utmost importance coming on for consideration in reference to reform. It was in this Parliament that resolutions in favour of reform were put and carried, that resolutions in favour of the disestablishment of the Irish Church were put and carried; yet it was eighteen months after Lord Derby assumed office that the dissolution which led to the election of the new Parliament took place. What I want to show to the House is this: that the Ministry does not necessarily require a majority, when it comes into office in the peculiar way in which this Ministry came into office, to enable it to put before the country and the House its propositions for the government of the country. After we get these before us, and have full information, we can make our choice—we can accept or reject the Ministry; but in the meantime there is an absolute constitutional right on the part of the Ministry to have a fair trial. And, above all, I say that at the present time it is peculiarly proper that they should have this trial, and upon this ground: I cannot allow that those gentlemen opposite have upon their side all the Liberalism of this House. When I see over there undoubtedly Tory members, gentlemen who within the last two or three years were Tories in England, I cannot recognize their claim to be Liberal leaders in this House.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Name.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The honorable gentleman will tell you his name himself; there is no necessity for me to do so, because it is no secret. The gentlemen on the Ministerial benches having placed upon the table of the House measures absolutely of a liberal character—much more liberal than the previous occupants of those benches put before the House, and admirably conceived in their provisions—I say it is the duty of the House to give them a fair trial—to at least let them officially put these things upon the table and officially discuss them, and then condemn them if they dare. The peculiar position of the House is this: that the true Liberals will cordially gather round these measures, and whether they are carried to-day, or to-morrow, or next month, it does not matter. I say the true Liberals will be eliminated from the true Tories, and will pass these measures, and will see that proper measures are placed upon the Statute Book. I say again, therefore, that in the peculiar position of parties the Government have a right to a fair trial. When we see honorable gentlemen on the other side coming forward as great reformers, and yet acting as they have done with regard to these measures previously, we can come to no other conclusion than that they make a "bogus" use of them for their own particular

purposes. What happened but a short time ago, when a Bill was brought down, and was passed in effect, if not in actual form, exactly as it was introduced into this House, and was passed also by the Upper House? Was not an attempt made to throw it away? And why? Simply because it was a useful thing to dangle before the eyes of the people, and to use in this great cry for reform. An honorable gentleman on the opposite side has said to us that we are like donkeys with a carrot held out before us. I say that that was the political carrot which was held out by the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) to the people. I say we must be true to ourselves. We want measures, and we want no mockery, and I will support those gentlemen who are now on the benches, and I say to them, "Whatever the result may be, you must stick to your posts—at all events until you have been afforded a full opportunity for a free discussion of the merits and demerits of your measures." I say to them furthermore that, now another night has been wasted, they should go back from the promise which they made to-day, and decline to take the motion of want of confidence on Tuesday next. They should say to honorable gentlemen opposite, "We have been deprived of another night for getting on with our business, you have not acceded to the proposition we made, and we will now insist upon having full time for the consideration of our measures, and until that time is given we will fix no day for considering the vote of want of confidence."

Mr. MASTERS.—My election speeches having again been referred to, it may perhaps be necessary for me to give a short further explanation. I admit that in my printed address to the electors, which appeared in some of the papers, the language might perhaps be open to the construction which some honorable members on the other side have put upon it, were it not qualified by the statements I have myself made in addressing the electors in the various centres. With reference to the particular matter to which the honorable gentleman who last spoke referred, I may say that I most emphatically and distinctly stated, and, indeed, commenced all my addresses with these words: "I have come before you as an independent candidate." I have received a number of telegrams lately from my constituents, entirely approving of my conduct, and stating also that I have acted quite consistently and have broken no pledges. I regret very much that some portion of my constituents should have a different idea; but I will read a paragraph which appears in the *Inangahua Herald*, one of the leading papers in the district, which will, I think, show clearly that I determined to hold an independent position:—

"According to the telegraphic news received from Wellington last night, the *Chronicle* charges Mr. Masters, one of the members for Grey Valley, with a flagrant breach of confidence to his constituents in not joining the Ministerialists. The *Inangahua Herald* was the only journal in which Mr. Masters's speech was fully reported; and on reference to our issue of the 4th ultimo we find Mr. Masters reported as follows: 'He declined

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to pledge himself as the supporter of any party in the House, but would leave himself, in the event of return, an independent member, prepared to support any Government that he believed would best give effect to the views he entertained, and upon which he claimed the support of the electors.' Surely nothing can there be construed into a pledge to support the present Administration."

I do not think that I need here add anything more. I conscientiously assure honorable members that when I came to Wellington I considered I was perfectly independent to take whichever side I thought fit, and to exercise my own judgment.

MR. HURSTHOUSE.—Sir, I merely wish to make one or two remarks with regard to what has fallen from two honorable gentlemen during this debate, one of whom, I regret to see, is now carefully leaving the House. I was going to appeal to his sympathies with regard to the youth of New Zealand, and the young members of this House, and I also wished to say something as to the way in which he treated the "No" I said to a statement of his. I was going to say it was a cruel thing for the late Premier of the colony, who is supposed to be the great friend of the youth of New Zealand, and of its future generations, to say he heard a voice he knew well, but cared little for. I am not so old a man as the late Premier. I have yet many years in which to gain the experience, and eloquence, and knowledge that honorable gentleman has gained; but there may be a day when even he and those who follow him will care to hear the voice of the obscure "whip" of the other party. There may be a day when my counsels may be sought after as well as his; and I say it is cruel of any honorable member to attempt to crush a young, and liberal, and, I may say, an honest man, endeavouring to do his duty to his country. I would advise the honorable member for Christchurch and the Thames, the late Premier of the colony, now that he has gained what he has talked so much about, to retire into the obscurity of his home, and there remain and enjoy the fruits of the liberal measures of which he claims to be the father. But my opinion is, that his liberal measures are really nothing more than clap-trap; that they have been of use to him in stumping the country, but that the people do not really want them. I think all the country wants is a simplification of our present laws, and not an increase of what is in many districts detrimental to the inhabitants. The country has been crying for bread, and the late Premier has given it a stone. The country has been demanding a liberal land law, and he has given it triennial Parliaments and proposed a redistribution of seats. He told us himself that he had at one time power to make laws. All I can say is, that it would have been well for this country if he had never been able to make those laws. One of the laws he made many years ago, when he was Governor, without Responsible Advisers, was a law which, at the present moment, is known as the Sir George Grey Land Regulations; and, strange as it may be, in the very instances which he quoted to-night to show that immense tracts of country were obtained by

runholders, the lands were acquired under those regulations, and the persons who got them were invited here from another colony by the honorable gentleman himself. And yet he says that that land law has sent one of its representatives to the Legislative Council, and has put another into this House. I deny that Cheviot has returned a member to this House as a representative of land. I say that that district is as large as almost any other in New Zealand. Who was it that caused these large landed properties to be obtained? It was that honorable gentleman himself; for, having reduced the price of our lands, he enabled capitalists to come in and purchase large tracts of country, and thereby deprive the poorer people of the power to obtain places to settle upon in later years. Having in this way picked all the plums out of the pudding, and having allowed all the best land to be sold to men whom he invited here, what did he do? Two years ago he turned round and passed a law called the Waste Lands Sales Act, which has had actually the effect of stopping all settlement, and driving hundreds of people from these shores. After selling the best part of New Zealand by his own autocratic power, he says now, "Having got rid of the best of the land, I will make political capital out of the rest, and make the poor man pay £1 an acre for that which I sold to the large capitalists for 5s. an acre." Let me say to the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Reid), Has it come to this, that a man of his ability, a man of his mind, a man of his classical knowledge, can come to this House and acknowledge that he is going to support the great Liberal party, as he calls them? And for what? Because they made water-races on the West Coast. Has it come to this, that a vote in this House is to be bought by a water-race or a railway? I am surprised that the people of New Zealand should have sunk so low, and that any honorable gentleman should make such confessions. Where is his patriotism? Where are those cries that have been echoed from one end of the colony to the other about electoral rights and triennial Parliaments? These, I should think, were the things that men of that great Liberal party would have given their allegiance for, and not for the sake of a water-race or a railway. I maintain that the west coast of the Middle Island—and I know something about it—has been more injured by the land law as it at present exists—which was introduced by Sir George Grey; not the Land Act of 1877, but the Land Sales Act—than by anything else that has been done in the past. That law of itself has done more injury to that part of the country than any benefit which can accrue to it by the construction of water-races, which the colony must pay for, and which the district itself cannot even pay the interest on. I know of hundreds who have been driven away from that part of the country simply from the want of means of settling the land. What does this great man—this great Premier—do to assist the people to settle on the land? When a Land Bill was passed which was good in many respects, although bad in others, he did all in his power to

prevent it becoming law. He also passed a measure which placed a minimum price of £1 an acre upon the land, and which has prevented thousands of persons from taking advantage of the deferred-payment system and settling on the land. He has perpetually endeavoured to persuade men that the land laws of this country are bad, and that it is most objectionable that it should be in the power of any single individual to take up large sections of country. I quite agree with him; and whenever he, as Prime Minister, or in any other capacity, introduces measures to enable people of small means to settle on the waste lands of the Crown, I will support him. There is no subject which the great mass of the country constituents are so interested in as that of good land laws. I am prepared to vote with the late Premier for any land laws that will have the effect of destroying large estates, but I differ from him in blaming the people who have acquired those estates. Surely there was nothing wrong or dishonorable in the conduct of the man who, being possessed of capital enough, acquired for himself a hundred thousand acres or so of land, when the laws enabled him to do so. Is such a person to be blamed, or the laws? Certainly the laws, or the law-makers, and there is where we blame the late Premier, for he made the law, and now he objects to the natural result of his own handiwork. The late Premier said that this House must be the real governing body of the colony. I always thought, until his advent here, that it was the real governing body of the colony; but I have seen Sir George Grey, when Premier, doing what no other Premier ever did in this colony. I have seen him overriding decisions of this House, and casting them aside as mere scum, and doing exactly contrary to the expressed wish of the country and the House. What did he do in regard to the Land Bill, and the now notorious Thames-Waikato Railway? He carefully set aside the decision of the House and rode rough-shod over the people's representatives. This is the man who now tells us that this House must be the governing body of the colony. I sincerely hope this Parliament will never have to submit to the degradation it has been subject to during the past few years, when we have seen the Premier overriding the decisions of Parliament and using his own discretion in matters of the greatest importance. I, with many other members of this House, am seriously grieved to see such an immense amount of time wasted in entirely useless discussion. I must say that a spirit of chivalry and fair-play has not actuated the leader of the Opposition and his supporters. Honourable members know that I have never had a very high opinion of the leader of the Opposition since I heard him stand up in his place in this House four years ago and say that, in his opinion, £200,000 was of greater importance to Otago than the unity of the colony. That statement sank into my heart, and has never been effaced. I do not believe he is a man of large soul or of large mind. He has lived, moved, and had his being in the southern part of the colony, and, in coming up here, he has got out of his latitude, and the sooner the honor-

Mr. Hursthouse

able gentleman goes peacefully back to political oblivion in Otago the better it will be for New Zealand. I am sure I shall never be able to give my support to a Government of which he is a component part. There are other members of this House who have publicly declared, in answer to questions by leading members of their constituents, that they would never vote for any Ministry of which the new leader of the Opposition was a component part; and yet we have not heard anything said about broken pledges in the case of those honorable gentlemen. I am not going to tell you that it is disgraceful for any honorable member to break his pledges. Let his own conscience be his judge. I deprecate strongly the conduct we have seen in this House with regard to one honorable member dragging before us the action of another honorable member before his constituents because he has seen fit to change his political views, or has been misrepresented in the papers. I take it that every man who comes here is a free agent, and is therefore at liberty to change his opinions if he thinks it right to do so. But it is decidedly objectionable to find an honorable member—pledged distinctly, and returned unopposed upon the distinct understanding, never to vote for any Ministry of which the present leader of the Opposition was a component part—voting steadily with the present Opposition, and the party which is likely to be in opposition for the next three years. We are here with our back up. We will not consent to retire from the position until we have had our say, and until we have done what we wish to do. All this waste of time rests entirely with the Opposition. It is useless to say that they have not obstructed business. There is a great deal of work on the Order Paper which does not require that strong party feeling which often spoils the legislation of this House, and which might be gone through—legislation which the country is desirous to see passed. These measures might have been read a second time if the Opposition had permitted it; but owing to the action of the present leader of the Opposition they will probably not become law this session. I deeply deplore the state in which we find the House at the present time, and I sincerely hope the Opposition will see the error of their ways and repent in sackcloth and ashes.

The House adjourned at eleven o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 16th October, 1879.

Personal Explanation—J. Jones—"Hannah Mokau"—Timaru County—Public Works Contracts—Otago Harbour—Ashburton Courthouse—Taranaki Volunteers—Mokau Land—Railway Iron and Rolling-Stock—Waikato-Thames Railway—Auckland Native Land Court—Chatham Islands Land-Tax—Pokeno Land and Pukekohe—Bombay Road—Northern Maori District—Auckland Improvement Commissioners' Transfer of Powers Bill—Waiuku Recreation Reserve Bill—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. HALL.—Before proceeding to the business on the Paper, I desire, as a matter of personal explanation, to draw attention to the incorrectness of a report in the *New Zealander* newspaper of the discussion that took place in the House last evening. Upon the question of my having resigned my seat in the Legislative Council on a former occasion, Sir George Grey is reported to have said, "Sir George Grey asked to give a personal explanation. When the Hon. the Premier resigned his seat, it was not known that he was leaving it to come into that House." It will be in the recollection of honorable members that I then rose, and said that for one month before my resignation was sent in I had been addressing the electors of the Heathcote. I think that was an important contradiction, and, the statement of Sir George Grey having been given in the newspaper I have named, the contradiction ought to have been given also. I call attention to the matter because the statement, being uncontradicted, leaves an entirely incorrect impression of what took place.

Sir G. GREY.—I rise also to make a personal explanation, and I beg to say that I had no knowledge, when the honorable gentleman resigned his seat in the Council, that he had issued an address to his constituents.

J. JONES.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked the Government Was, or is, Mr. Joshua Jones, of New Plymouth or Mokau, an agent of the Government; and, if so, what are, or were, his duties? Have any payments been made to Mr. Jones; and, if so, what are the respective amounts, and for what special service done? Had Mr. Jones the free use of the telegraph wires; and, if so, on what pretext?

Mr. HALL said, with regard to the first two questions, "Was, or is, Mr. Joshua Jones, of New Plymouth or Mokau, an agent of the Government; and, if so, what are, or were, his duties? Have any payments been made to Mr. Jones; and, if so, what are the respective amounts, and for what special service done?" the answer was as follows:—

"Mr. Joshua Jones has been, to some extent, recognized as an agent of the Government, but not as a Government official. There is no correspondence to show the specific nature of the services he has performed. I append a return showing the sums he has received from the Government. The total amount is £390.

Date.	Particulars.	Amount.
1878.		
Sept. 27 1879.	Gratuity for services	£ s. d. 120 0 0
May 20	For services at Mokau and Kopua Native meeting	20 0 0
Sept. 4	Bonus for services performed for Native Department at Mokau during 1878 and 1879	250 0 0
	Total	390 0 0

"Memorandum.

"There are no records in the Native Office showing the specific services performed by Mr. Jones. So far as I am aware, the above amounts have been paid in connection with the opening up of the Mokau District, in which he is said to have exercised considerable influence over the Natives.

"T. W. LEWIS,

"11th Oct., 1879." "Under Secretary.

In regard to the third question, "Had Mr. Jones the free use of the telegraph wires; and, if so, on what pretext?" the answer was, that at the instance of the Native Minister orders were sent by the Postmaster-General that Mr. Jones should be allowed the free use of the telegraph when telegraphing to the Government. That was the whole answer to the question.

Mr. GIBBS moved, That the returns be laid on the table, and printed.

Mr. TURNBULL saw no necessity for printing the returns, as the question and answer would appear on the records of the House.

Mr. HALL said the paper from which he quoted was hardly a return. It was merely a statement read to the House in answer to the question of the honorable member for Grey and Bell. However, if honorable members wished to have it printed and laid on the table, he would offer no objection.

Mr. MOSS thought it would be doing very great injustice to the late Government to print so important a statement unaccompanied by explanation. Why not have the vouchers printed with it? Why not have the whole of the correspondence, showing upon what service Mr. Jones was employed? He happened to know that there was a very bitter feud going on between certain parties at Taranaki.—

Mr. SHEEHAN hoped the honorable gentleman would not insist upon his objection to the printing of these papers. He was not at all afraid of the result, and would be prepared to discuss the subject fully at the proper time, when they came to discuss the Native Affairs Statement.

Mr. MOSS would still state his objection to the printing, on the ground that this was part of a system of dirt-throwing which had been adopted with regard to the late Government and all connected with them. That must be obvious to every honorable member when he looked at the Order Paper and saw the insidious and insulting questions that were put upon it. The honorable member for Waikouaiti had placed a notice on the Paper which he (Mr. Moss) thought would be regretted by every person who had the least regard for the dignity of the House.

Mr. McLEAN.—It is a very proper motion.

Mr. MOSS.—That was a matter of taste and feeling. Now, what were the facts of this case? Mr. Joshua Jones was a settler of Taranaki, who had done good service in opening up the Mokau, who had spent a large sum of money in putting a steamer on that river, and who, from all he had heard, was an energetic and enterprising man, but who had unfortunately come into conflict with the "old identity" element in Taranaki, and

the House ought not to be dragged into a petty squabble on that account. That is the interpretation he put on the whole matter, and he would like to see these squabbles fought out at home. As the late Native Minister did not object to the printing of the papers, he would not persevere in his own objection; but, as the inference had been conveyed that there was something discreditable in the negotiations with Mr. Jones, he felt bound to say that Mr. Jones did render very important service in connection with the Native meeting at Te Kopua, as many honorable members knew. Whether he had been paid for that he did not know.

Mr. HALL.—He received £20 for that.

Mr. MOSS was quite sure that that was a service for which he would have been paid much more highly by the honorable gentlemen now on the Government benches. But what he wished to say was this: that the statement made by the honorable gentleman, like the Financial Statement made a few days ago, was not calculated to expedite the public business. It was a garbled report, without any vouchers or details, and it was made by the Premier in a manner that left a great deal to be inferred. It was time that this sort of thing came to an end. They had at the present moment the very unfortunate spectacle of a Government obstructing the business of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER informed the honorable member that he was travelling beyond the question before the House.

Mr. MOSS said he would not further refer to the fact that the Government were obstructing the business of the House; but they had before them a long and probably a protracted and bitter struggle, and he was extremely sorry to find that the good feeling that might preserve the amenities of debate during the struggle was being risked by the course taken in these matters by the honorable gentlemen who now occupied the Government benches.

Colonel TRIMBLE objected to the word "insidious" being used in reference to the questions he put on the Paper. They were put on in good faith. They were put there at the wish of his constituents, and he believed the House would get some information from the answers which would instruct it in the course it ought to take in certain matters. He had nothing further to say in reference to the matter at present. He merely wished to protest against the word "insidious" being used in regard to the questions he put on the Paper.

Mr. HISLOP said, if this question was put on the Order Paper with the object of obtaining information, why was it not put on the Paper when the late Government were on the Ministerial benches? He thought the remarks of the honorable member for Parnell were fully borne out by the manner of the question and the time at which it was put.

Major ATKINSON said that last session he put questions and motions on the Paper asking for information, but got none. They got promises, but nothing was done, and they gave it up as a bad job. They determined to take another course,

Mr. Moss

which was to get rid of a Government which refused to give the public any information except upon such subjects as it chose. As to the documents relative to this matter, the honorable member for Parnell, or any other honorable member, could see any documents connected with it; but the difficulty was, that there were none to produce. All that Mr. Jones appeared to be employed to do was to get a lease of 20,000 acres of land for himself, to have it surveyed at the Government cost, the Government providing the surveyor, and to get a Court to sit to grant the land to him. That appeared to be the only service Mr. Jones had rendered, according to the public documents; but he would undertake to lay before the House every document that could be found. The Government decided that the fullest information connected with the matter should be laid before the House, when the subject could be discussed at a future time. He might add that they would give every possible information to every honorable member who might ask for it, no matter to what side of the House he belonged.

Mr. SHEEHAN might state, by way of explanation, that what the honorable gentleman said was quite correct, but he omitted to state that the Government found a surveyor, or funds to pay the surveyor, in all such cases as this.

Major ATKINSON.—There is no information to that effect in the offices.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—It is in the Taranaki office.

Major ATKINSON.—We have applied to the Taranaki office, and none can be found.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Then it ought to be there.

Mr. WAKEFIELD thought that this was quite a new way of treating questions put by honorable members. This was simply a system of terrorism, which would absolutely prevent honorable members putting questions on the Paper, lest they should be attacked for having done so with some insidious motive. He had several questions on the Paper, and he really feared that when he asked something about the Clitham Islands land-tax he would be at once attacked as having intended to throw out some imputation against the late Government. The honorable gentleman who had asked the question now under consideration had stated that he had done so at the request of his constituents, and yet he was charged with doing so for some insidious motive. The honorable member for Waitaki had no right to make such a charge. The honorable gentleman, instead of speaking as to the completeness or correctness of the answer, attacked the conduct of the gentleman who put the question evidently in perfectly good faith. He knew nothing about this Mr. Jones until he had seen the question; but now he was very glad the matter had been brought forward, and believed that it was to the interest of the public that the whole of the documents on the subject should be printed. But he hoped honorable members on all sides would support others in a perfect freedom to put any questions they thought fit to the Government.

Mr. GISBORNE believed the system of putting questions was very liable to abuse. He did not wish to impute motives to any honorable

gentleman of wishing to cast imputations upon others; but that was the effect of such questions as these, and of replies given to such questions, when third parties, against whom imputations appeared to be made, had no chance of making any defence. Very often garbled statements were indirectly made in these questions, and insinuations thrown out against persons who had no opportunity of replying, whereas, if the papers were moved for by a motion in a straightforward and manly way, then correct statements of the whole case could be made. He had seen this system grow up in the House of asking questions which indirectly levelled insinuations against third parties, and of replies being made which could not be answered; and he very much regretted it, because it led to the belief that the persons referred to had committed some great offence, whereas, if the papers had been moved for in the ordinary way, the persons implicated would have had an opportunity, either as members or through members, of defending themselves.

Mr. BOWEN took it that it was the Speaker's duty to see that no improper question was put upon the Order Paper; and he had yet to learn that the representatives of the people were to be restricted from asking the Government any questions as to abuses which they considered might have taken place. It was a matter of notoriety in New Plymouth that there had been great uneasiness as to what this Mr. Jones had been doing at Mokau; and that feeling was not confined to New Plymouth alone. He had no idea, when he read this question on the Order Paper, that it would have given rise to such a storm of indignation and terror on the part of the Opposition. He must say he sympathized with the late Native Minister, who deprecated the opposition to printing the papers. He might well say, "Save me from my friends."

Mr. TURNBULL asked leave to explain that the reason why he opposed the motion of the honorable member for Collingwood for the printing of this paper was that, if the House sanctioned the printing of every paper placed on the table in reply to a question, it would have the effect of turning every question into a subject for debate. That would prevent honorable members obtaining the information they sought for, and which they considered would be useful.

Mr. McLEAN thought the House had obtained some very useful information in regard to this matter, and that it would be well that that information should go forth to the public. The honorable member for Totara said that this system of asking questions had grown up to be a great abuse. He would ask that honorable gentleman to tell him how many of the returns which were asked for or moved for and sanctioned by the House during last session and the session before had been laid on the table. The fact was that, in defiance of the wishes of the House, as shown by the resolutions which had been passed, the late Government had furnished no returns; but now, when they had got people in office who would give some information, it was surely right that honorable members should take the opportunity of getting the information they desired.

As for what the honorable member for Waitaki said, it would be rather a strange thing if honorable members were only allowed to put questions to please other honorable members, and when those honorable gentlemen told them they might do so. Every honorable member had a right to take his own time for putting any question, and for putting it in such a way that he might get the best possible information on the subject. He hoped the papers relating to this now celebrated Mr. Jones would be printed, and circulated throughout the colony, and that, this matter having been unearthed, papers on other subjects of a similar kind might be obtained.

Mr. READER WOOD would be sorry to throw the slightest obstacle in the way of honorable gentlemen getting all the information they desired on any subjects in which they might be interested. In fact, he wished himself to obtain a little additional information to that which had already been furnished on this particular subject. It appeared to him there was some fatality connected with the name of Jones in that House. Some years ago there was a Mr. Jones brought up to the bar of the House, whom the House was going to hang, draw, and quarter without mercy, and yet the whole business ended in an expense to the colony of some thousands of pounds, and nothing more. He feared, if they were going further into the case of the present Mr. Jones, it might cost the colony something the same. Therefore he wished to ask the Government if they would state whether this Mr. Jones was any relation to the other Mr. Jones; and, if so, whether the result of this question was likely to lead the colony into as great an expense as that incurred with regard to the other Mr. Jones.

Mr. GIBBORNE would point out that it was laid down in *May* that "when a question affects the character of a member, or reflects upon the conduct of other persons, it is more properly the subject of a motion, which can be conveniently debated."

Major ATKINSON said there was no reflection whatever upon the character of any one in the question put by the honorable member for Grey and Bell, as any honorable member could see who would take the trouble of reading it through. The late Native Minister had himself asked the House to consent to the printing of the papers, and no doubt that honorable gentleman would be well able, when the proper time came, to defend himself, if any charges were made against him. He submitted also that there was no imputation in the papers themselves; and all the Government had done was to answer the question put to them by bringing the papers down.

Mr. SPEAKER saw nothing irregular in the question put by the honorable member for Grey and Bell. He must say, however, that an irregularity had been growing up for years in the House, and that was, seeking to obtain returns by means of questions. He thought returns should not be obtained except by motion.

Motion agreed to.

"HANNAH MOKAU."

Colonel TRIMBLE asked the Government,

If it has, or ever had, any pecuniary interest or liability in regard to the steamship "Hannah Mokau;" if so, under what circumstances did the Government acquire such interest? and has Government received any dividend or interest upon its shares or mortgage or advance upon the said "Hannah Mokau"? Has Government paid for the share or other interest in said ship held in the name of Rewi, Te Wetera, or other Native; if so, what amount has Government thus paid, and what security is held for repayment?

Mr. BRYCE replied,—1. *Pecuniary interest*: The Government hold a mortgage over the vessel for £864. 2. *Liability*: A subsidy at the rate of £300 a year has been promised while service to Mokau is satisfactorily performed. Subsidy for past eight months has been withheld on account of irregularity of service. 3. *Circumstances under which interest was acquired*: The steamer was seized by parties to whom she had been assigned as security for money left owing on her construction; and as Rewi and others held shares in her, and it being considered of political importance she should be kept in the trade, it was decided that the money should be paid, and the assignment taken over by the Government, which was done. 4. The Government have received no dividend or interest. 5. £100 each has been paid on account of Rewi and Wetera for shares held in the steamer.

Mr. SHEEHAN said that was a perfectly fair and straightforward account of the transaction. He would move that the honorable gentleman's answer be printed.

Motion agreed to.

TIMARU COUNTY.

Mr. WAKEFIELD asked the Government, Whether they have received a petition from electors within the proposed County of Timaru, praying that the county may not be constituted; and, if so, whether they will lay a copy of it before this House?

Mr. HALL replied that the Government had not received the petition described in the question. A petition was presented, asking for the constitution of part of the County of Geraldine into a separate county, to be called the Timaru County. That included the Riding of Timaru and a portion of the adjoining Riding of Mount Cook. The Government had received no direct petition that the County of Timaru might not be constituted; but they had received a petition from the residents of the part of the adjoining Riding of Mount Cook, asking that they might not be included in that county.

PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS.

Mr. MACANDREW asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will lay before this House a return showing the whole of the colonial public works under his department at present contracted for within each provincial district, the name of the contractor and date of contract in each case, the time for completion, amount of tender, and progress-payment to date; also, the number and date of appropriation by Parliament, or other

Colonel Trimble

authority by virtue of which such contract or engagement has been entered into?

Mr. OLIVER replied that the return would be put in hand at once. It embraced the whole of the public works, and would take some little time to prepare.

OTAGO HARBOUR.

Mr. MACANDREW asked the Premier, What action, if any, the Government propose to take on the subject of a petition from the inhabitants of Port Chalmers and surrounding districts, praying for inquiry into the present condition of Otago Harbour, which petition has been referred by His Excellency the Governor to his Responsible Advisers?

Mr. HALL replied that the general question of the state of the harbour had been already referred to Sir John Coode. The Government, when they sent to Sir John Coode the further information which he asked for in reference to Otago Harbour, would also refer this petition to him.

ASHBURTON COURTHOUSE.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Minister of Justice, If he will cause a sum of money to be placed on the estimates for building a Courthouse at Ashburton? In 1878, £300 was put on the estimates for building a Courthouse at Ashburton, or, rather, for fitting up an old building worth about half that sum. The residents protested against this course being taken, and last session the Government promised to sanction the expenditure of £500, but up to this time nothing had been done. Ashburton was the centre of a large and increasing population. There were no fewer than six lawyers practising in the borough, and the accommodation was altogether inadequate for the business. He hoped the Minister would see his way to put a substantial sum on the estimates for a suitable building.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that he had looked into this question, and he was personally aware of the circumstances stated by the honorable member. The Government recognized the importance of the work, and would place a sum of money on the estimates for the purpose.

TARANAKI VOLUNTEERS.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked the Defence Minister, Whether he is aware that the great bulk of the Taranaki Volunteers are armed with antiquated muzzle-loading rifles, many of them of inferior quality even of their kind; and when the Taranaki Volunteers will be armed with breech-loading rifles?

Mr. HALL replied that, out of 970 Volunteers in the Taranaki District, 618 were armed with muzzle-loaders. Two thousand stand of Sniders had been ordered from England, and should be on their way out at the present time. The present Government had given directions for the remainder of the short Sniders in store in Wellington, amounting to about 320, to be issued to the Volunteers of Taranaki.

MOKAU LAND.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked the Premier, Whe-

ther the Government has authorized or assisted Mr. Joshua Jones, or other person, to lease or purchase a tract of land to the extent of about 30,000 acres from the Natives, north-east of the Mokau River; and whether the surveyors now engaged in defining the boundaries of the said land are in the pay of the Government, or have been instructed in any way as to their procedure by the Government?

Mr. BRYCE replied that this question also appeared to be connected with the famous name of Jones; but he hoped that on this occasion it would not cause much discussion. It appeared that the late Native Minister did inform Mr. Jones that the Government would not interfere with him in acquiring a block of land of considerable extent, but the exact acreage of which he (Mr. Bryce) did not know. That promise appeared only to have been made with respect to the leasing of the block. It did not refer to the purchase of the land. The promise was supplemented by an assurance that the Government would assist him so far as it could in acquiring that leasehold from the Natives. With respect to the survey of the block, it was now being taken by surveyors in the employment of the Government. He had endeavoured to ascertain whether any bond or other form of security existed for the repayment of the cost of survey, and had found no trace of it; but he was not prepared to say that the statement of the late Native Minister with reference to the matter was not correct. It might possibly be in some office in Taranaki.

Mr. SHEEHAN said that, for the sake of being able to say a few words, he would move, That the answer be laid on the table. He would not go into this transaction just now, but he was prepared to say that the honorable gentleman had explained very fairly that the late Government had allowed a lease of this land to be got. The reason was, that the land lay alongside the King-country, and they thought it was a favourable opportunity for breaking down the border. The facts were perfectly well known in Taranaki, and the Government gave no assistance beyond what the law required. The moment he gave his consent to the survey being taken the matter passed into another department, and therefore, if the usual bond had not been taken, he could not help it.

RAILWAY IRON AND ROLLING-STOCK.

Mr. SUTTON asked the Minister for Public Works,—(1.) What amount has been paid since 1st July last to Messrs. Guthrie and Larnach for the supply of railway iron and railway rolling-stock, and what amount is still owing on the same account? (2.) Whether the arrangement was a private one, or was it open to public competition? (3.) Whether they will lay before this House all correspondence between the Government, the Agent-General or any other officer, and Messrs. Guthrie and Larnach, in reference to the supply by that company of railway material?

Mr. OLIVER replied that he had had a return prepared showing the state of the account. The sum already paid was £12,450 17s. 6d., and the return would show what balance remained unpaid,

and what portion of the contract still remained unfulfilled. He would lay that return on the table. With regard to the second part of the question, he had to say that the contract was open to public competition. It was advertised in the usual manner, and certain tenders were received, of which Messrs. Guthrie and Larnach's appeared to be the lowest. The Government would have no objection to lay the whole correspondence on the table.

WAIKATO-THAMES RAILWAY.

Mr. McLEAN asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will lay before this House a copy of the plan, and estimate, and certificate of the Engineer in Charge of the North Island in connection with the railway from Waikato to the Thames: also, a distinctively-coloured map, showing the surveys that have been made of the country between Grahamstown and Te Aroha, and those parts which have not been surveyed; also showing how far the surveys of the line between Grahamstown and Te Aroha have been completed, and the place where the Natives stepped in and prevented the surveyors going any further, and the place where the man Williams was shot, near Ohinemuri?

Mr. OLIVER replied that he had instructed the District Engineer to furnish as soon as possible the plans and maps asked for. Plans and estimates were laid upon the table on the 9th of August last. The other information required would be supplied as soon as possible.

Mr. SHEEHAN said that, if the honorable gentleman wished the House to understand that the man was shot on the railway survey, he was mistaken. He was shot at another place.

AUCKLAND NATIVE LAND COURT.

Mr. ANDREWS asked the Government, If they will lay before this House a return showing the annual cost of conducting and maintaining the head office of the Native Land Court at Auckland?

Mr. BRYCE said the return asked for was in course of preparation, and would be ready in a very few days.

CHATHAM ISLANDS LAND-TAX.

Mr. WAKEFIELD asked the Government, Whether they have received any communication from the inhabitants of the Chatham Islands relative to the enforcement of a land-tax on that territory; and, if so, whether they will lay a copy of it before this House?

Major ATKINSON replied that the Government had received a communication from the inhabitants of the Chatham Islands, a copy of which he would now lay on the table of the House.

POKENO LAND AND PUKEKOHE-BOMBAY ROAD.

Major HARRIS asked the Government, If they will lay before this House a copy of all correspondence between the Rev. S. Norrie, Rev. D. Bruce, and others, with the Government, in reference to a claim to Lot 784, Queen's Re-

doubt, Pokeno? Also, if the settlers through whose land a road has been taken between Pukekohe and the Bombay Settlement have signed a deed dedicating said road? If so, have they been compensated, as agreed upon; or, if not compensated, when they will be?

Mr. ROLLESTON said the papers asked for were very voluminous, and contained a good deal of conflicting information. If the honorable gentleman wished it, he would be very glad to lay either the whole or any of them on the table of the House. He would suggest to the honorable gentleman to call at the office and make a selection from the papers. With regard to the latter part of the question, he found that cheques for compensation had been issued from the Treasury on the 24th September and 8th October respectively.

NORTHERN MAORI DISTRICT.

Mr. BEETHAM rose to draw the attention of the House, as a question of privilege, to the allegations contained in the petition of Hirini Rawiri Taiwhanga, and then to move the appointment of a Select Committee to report on the same. Such Committee to consist of Mr. Brandon, Mr. De Lautour, Sir George Grey, Mr. Hislop, Mr. Murray, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Rolleston, and the mover; five to form a quorum. To report within a week.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR wished to raise the question whether or not this motion was in order. By the rules of the House, if objection were not taken at once, it could not afterwards be raised, when the question was once put. He observed that this motion had been put upon the Order Paper with, he presumed, the concurrence of the Speaker. It had been on the Order Paper for some days as a notice of motion. Now, so far as he could find, the rule was that motions of privilege could take precedence if they were of urgency and relative to a matter which arose suddenly. In this case, however, the cause arose before the session commenced, and Parliament had now been sitting nearly a month. During the whole of that time it was open to the honorable member to give notice of his intended motion in the ordinary course. On the previous day there was an opportunity for the honorable member to move. His notice of motion was on the Paper, and he would have been in order in at once raising the question. What he (Mr. De Lautour) wished to draw particular attention to was the inconvenience that would arise if this practice were allowed, except in cases where a question of privilege arose suddenly, and was a matter of urgency. Suppose, in the interest of party on either side of the House, honorable members packed the Order Paper, as he believed had been done, with notices of motion for party purposes. Suppose that these motions assumed the form of questions of privilege, and suppose honorable members watched their opportunity and brought them on suddenly on any day whenever it suited the interests of their party to do so, it would impede all business being done. Such an engine of party warfare would be quite new in this House. At present they had arrived at a

state of things when one vote either way was a substantial advantage. They had arrived at a position when a motion of want of confidence was absolutely before the House. A supporter of one side, after a month's opportunity, during which period no action was taken, and after this notice of motion had been on the Order Paper several days, now suddenly interrupted the business by bringing on a question affecting the seat of a member of this House. By the rule laid down, this question, not having been brought up as a matter of urgency, not having been brought before the House, although on the Order Paper, should be dealt with as an adjourned question. In the Imperial Parliament, a question relating to the Bridport election appeared to have been brought up suddenly, and the Speaker said,—

"I will remind the House of the relative strictness with which the rule as to privilege is enforced. If a debate on a question of undoubted privilege be adjourned, on its renewal it is not entitled to precedence. . . . It appears to me that the House ought not to allow subjects to be introduced as of privilege, of which notice for a future day can without inconvenience be given."

An opportunity had been given to the honorable gentleman to bring this motion before the House since he placed the notice on the Order Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER understood the honorable gentleman to say that this was an adjourned debate. In what way had it been adjourned?

Mr. DE LAUTOUR said it stood in the position of an adjourned debate, because an opportunity had been given to the honorable gentleman to bring the motion forward since the matter to which it referred occurred and was within his knowledge and that of the House. Therefore it was not a question of urgency, and the rule dealing with adjourned debates was applicable to this case. The rule undoubtedly was, that matter brought forward suddenly to intercept business must have arisen suddenly, and be a matter of urgency. Having failed for several days to bring the question forward, it could not be taken to be a question of such urgency as to intercept the ordinary business. He submitted this view more in the interest of the practice of this House, not at all doubting the Speaker's care over the interests of this House. If the proposed course were allowed it could be used as an engine of party warfare. There would be nothing to prevent honorable members on either side of the House from loading the Order Paper with motions of privilege, and raising them day after day, as suited their party leaders. It had been so in this case. He ventured to suggest that such a course ought not to be allowed unless it could be shown that the question was one of urgency. The question could not be considered as such, inasmuch as it had not arisen suddenly. He submitted that the objections he had raised were applicable to the present case. If the proposed course were allowed they would be establishing a new departure in their practice.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had looked very carefully into the matter, and he found that anything that affected the right of a gentleman to

a seat in this House was a matter of privilege, and as such was entitled to be considered the first thing on the Paper. He did not find among the authorities he had consulted one instance in which a matter affecting an election was not considered as one of privilege. The honorable gentleman was quite right in saying that he (Mr. Speaker) would not allow any irregular procedure on the score of privilege to be adopted and used as a means of party warfare in this House. He would take special care that the claim of privilege should not be extended to any notice of motion which did not strictly relate to a matter of privilege.

Mr. TOLE would like to ask the ruling of Mr. Speaker as to whether this motion could be considered—raising a question of privilege based upon a petition which was not actually before the House. The basis of the honorable gentleman's motion was in regard to certain allegations contained in a petition. Honorable members had a right to see that petition. If they looked at it, they would see that it was in the nature of an election petition; and for that reason it should have been presented to the House within a certain number of days, and should comply with the provisions of the Election Petitions Act. In no single particular did it comply with the provisions of that Act. With all respect to the opinion of Mr. Speaker, he would submit that this was a question of privilege based on an informal petition not before the House, and could not be brought forward by the honorable member. He would also submit that the petition came within the meaning of the 276th Standing Order: "Petitions in the nature of election petitions will not be received unless the forms required by the Election Petitions Act have been complied with, the same being certified by the proper officer." He had seen the petition, and he was aware that it had not been certified to by the proper officer. If the honorable gentleman had raised the question of privilege on his own mere motion, and from his own knowledge that a gentleman sitting in this House had no right to be in the House, the House would rule that he was perfectly in order in raising it as a question of privilege; but, inasmuch as the present question of privilege was based upon allegations contained in a document which was informal, and therefore not before the House, he would submit that the honorable gentleman was not in order in going on with the question.

Mr. SPEAKER found the law clearly laid down that—

"Whenever any question is raised affecting the seat of a member, and involving matters of doubt either in law or fact, it is customary to refer it to the consideration of a Committee."

He thought the arguments just used were such as ought to be addressed to such a body as the Committee appointed to try the merits of an election petition, and which had to try the question whether or not the sitting member was disqualified.

Major ATKINSON said the 285th Standing Order entirely disposed of the honorable gentleman's objection. This was a petition from a

person of the Native race, and the rules of the House did not apply to such petitions.

Mr. SPEAKER said the provisions of the Election Petitions Acts applied equally to petitions coming from the Native race. The provisions of those Acts had to be conformed to, as in the case of the late Karaitiana when a petitioner.

Mr. BEETHAM deprecated any idea whatever of using this motion in any way as an engine for party warfare. Such was not at all the case. If the honorable member for Mount Ida had inquired into the facts he would have found that it was on the 10th of October he presented a petition from Hirini Rawiri Taiwhanga to this House. He then gave notice that he should on a certain day move for a Committee to inquire into the allegations contained in that petition. And as he then mentioned that it was a question of privilege, the honorable member must know that he must have alluded to that part of the petition which referred to the disqualification of Hone Mohi Tawhai. He (Mr. Beetham) was well aware that an election petition would not have been in order if he had presented it in the way he did. He was well aware that an election petition had to go through certain forms. But this referred to a question of disqualification, and, as such, he gave notice that he should move for the appointment of a Committee to examine and report upon the allegations contained in the petition of Hirini Taiwhanga. It was necessary that he should read the two charges contained in the petition of Hirini Taiwhanga. The petition began in the usual form, and then went on to say,—

"The undersigned, your petitioner and second highest candidate that polled among the number voted for for the election of a Maori member to Parliament for the Northern Maori Electoral District, sheweth—

"That the election of Hone Mohi Tawhai, as Maori representative in Parliament for this electoral district, is altogether illegal under 'The Disqualification Act, 1878;' but that I, Hirini Taiwhanga, according to this Act, am the legal candidate to be returned to Parliament as member.

"The grounds upon which I lay this claim are the same as those which are contained in the protest I laid before and explained to Mr. Kemp, Returning Officer, on the day of the official declaration of the poll.

"HIRINI RAWIRI TAIWHANGA."

These were the grounds of protest directed to Mr. Kemp, the Returning Officer:—

"Kaikohe, Bay of Islands,

"15th September, 1879.

"SIR,—I, the undersigned, beg to inform you that Hone Mohi Tawhai is not at all the proper person to be returned as member for this Maori electoral district in Parliament, neither is Timoti Puhipi (that is, if he is elected), but that I am the proper person to be returned as member.

"The grounds of protest are—firstly, That the said Hone Mohi Tawhai and Timoti Puhipi are Assessors, and they did not send in their resignations before the day of nomination. Because, if that is allowable according to the Act, why, all Government servants holding salaries from £20

to £700 per annum can stand to be elected to Parliament. Now, when he (Mobi) saw (and the Native Minister saw) that he headed the poll, a telegram was immediately sent by the Native Minister—that is, the Government—warning Hone Mohi Tawhai and Timoti Puhipi to quickly resign their appointments before the hour of the official declaration of the poll: that probably one of them might be elected, or even if they were not they had nothing to fear, because they would be reinstated to their offices by the Government. If the law allows this, it will be causing a great injustice to those not holding Government offices.

“HIRINI RAWIRI TAIWHANGA.”

The petition then went on to state that certain acts of bribery were committed during that election; but he did not think he should be in order at the present time in referring to this. What he had now to do was to move that a Committee be appointed, to whom should be referred this question of disqualification. Of course, if the Committee wished to go into the question they could make a representation, if they pleased, on this point of bribery and corruption; but this was a matter he would leave in the hands of the Committee. It had been said by the honorable member for Mount Ida that he (Mr. Beetham) did not take advantage when he had an opportunity of bringing this question of privilege before the House. When he presented the petition on the 10th October he gave notice that on Tuesday last he should move that this Committee should be appointed. He gave full notice of it—

Mr. SHEEHAN.—In writing?

Mr. BEETHAM.—I gave notice to the Clerk of the House—

Mr. SHEEHAN.—In writing?

Mr. BEETHAM said he gave notice of motion in the usual form that he should, on Tuesday last, move for the appointment of a Committee. He did not ask Mr. Speaker to allow him to put a question of privilege, but waited until the usual time should arrive when notices of motion should be gone on with; but it was well known the House never got there, and when the morning sitting closed on the following day he found his motion was in the same position as before, not through any fault of his. His motion had gone down in the Order Paper, and at Wednesday's evening sitting he asked Mr. Speaker, as a point of order, whether he could then bring on this question of privilege before the House. Some honorable members objected that they did not hear his remarks on that point. Possibly, if the honorable member for Mount Ida had heard them, he would have known it was not his (Mr. Beetham's) fault that this question was not before the House yesterday. He was not merely going on the allegations contained in this petition. He had considered it his duty, as he had given notice for the appointment of a Committee, to inquire into the truth or otherwise of the allegations contained in that petition, and he found that the nomination for the Northern Maori District took place on the 1st September, that the election took place on the 8th September, and that the resignation of Hone Mohi Tawhai, as

Assessor, took place on the 10th September. He thought this showed quite clearly that there was a very good case to go to a Committee, and he could not understand why any objection could be taken to that course being adopted. He merely wished that this question should be fairly considered; and, in giving notice of certain names which he should propose on the Committee, he had carefully taken members from both sides of the House, to insure that the inquiry should be a full and impartial one. An honorable member had referred to a question which had previously been raised in regard to a late member for Auckland City West, and it might be as well that he should inform the House that a Committee was granted in that case. He felt doubtful where to take precedents from—whether to go to the Old Country, or to take the precedents that had arisen here. He had heard it stated that they should not go for precedents to the Old Country. He did not believe in that at all—he did not believe they could do better than in most cases to follow the precedents laid down by the British Parliament; but in this case they had precedents of their own to guide them. The late Mr. John Williamson, after the election for Auckland City West had taken place, wrote to the then Speaker (Sir F. Dillon Bell), stating that when he was elected he held the office of Commissioner of Crown Lands, and that the validity of his election had been called in question. The Speaker read this letter to the House. Mr. Fox then moved, “That a respectful address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying him to issue a new writ for the election of a member for Auckland City West.” There was a certain discussion, in which Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Gisborne and others took part. Mr. Gisborne thought the proper course to adopt would be to move the appointment of a Committee:—

“If Mr. Williamson had addressed a letter announcing his resignation to the Speaker, the case would have been analogous to a case referred to in May's Parliamentary Practice, and the House could have issued a new writ. As, however, the question was one of very great importance, it should not be decided on the spur of the moment. He therefore thought that, in order to establish a precedent, it would be advisable to appoint a Committee to search for precedents, and to inform the House of the result of their investigations. . . . He would therefore move, as an amendment, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the practice of this House and the law on points arising in connection with the elections, and especially with regard to the election for Auckland City West. The Committee to consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brandon, Mr. Eves, Mr. Fox, Sir D. Monro, Mr. O'Rorke, Mr. Stafford, Mr. Bunny, and the mover.”

This was carried on the 15th August. One day after that, Mr. Fox brought up the report of the Committee on the Auckland City West Election. The report was read, as follows:—

“The Select Committee, to whom was referred by your honorable House to inquire into the practice of this House and the law on all points arising in connection with the election for Auckland City

Mr. Beetham

West, have, in obedience to the order of your honorable House, searched for precedents, and ascertained the practice of and the law of Parliament bearing on the subject; and have come to the following resolutions:—

"1. That the return of Mr. John Williamson for Auckland City West was null and void, he holding, at the time of his return, an office of emolument by appointment of the Governor of New Zealand.

"2. That the Committee do recommend that the House do direct Mr. Speaker to forthwith issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Writs, to make out a new writ to supply the vacancy.

"Which resolutions the Committee have directed me to report to the House."

It was ordered that the report lie on the table. On the motion of Mr. Fox, it was ordered,—

"That Mr. Speaker be directed to issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Writs to make out a new writ for electing a member of this House for the District of Auckland City West, in the room of John Williamson, Esquire, whose election is declared null and void."

He did not think it necessary to go further into the question of precedent; but he thought he had shown that if the allegations contained in the petition of Hirini Taiwhanga could be sustained—and he considered that they were sustained by the information with which he had made himself acquainted—this was a case which should be inquired into without delay. He might say in conclusion that, if the House should deem that the Committee he had mentioned was not a fair one, he was quite prepared, with the permission of the House, to amend his motion by introducing any new names that might be thought satisfactory to honorable members generally. He only wished that this question should be fairly, honestly, and straightforwardly considered, in order that if Hone Mohi Tawhai was disqualified he might not sit in that House subject to a penalty of £50 per diem. He did not think it necessary that he should quote from the Disqualification Act. The provisions of that Act were, of course, well known to members of that House. It would be for the Committee, when it met, to say whether or not Hone Mohi Tawhai was disqualified to sit as a member of that House.

Mr. STEWART said he would like to be informed whether this Disqualification Act had ever been translated into the Maori language, because it seemed to him that it would be a gross injustice on the part of the House to make subject to to the Act men who were entirely ignorant of its provisions.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

Mr. STEWART.—Some honorable gentleman said "Oh!" He could not congratulate that honorable gentleman on his sense of justice. He conceived it to be one of the fundamental rules of legislation that those to be affected by laws should have an opportunity of understanding the laws which governed them; and if it was to be suggested that the House was to be guilty of an act of injustice towards one of the Maori race by making him subject to an Act which had never been translated to him and a knowledge

of which he had had no opportunity of acquiring, and that because he had unconsciously transgressed a technical Act, he was very sorry for those who brought forward such a proposition. He appealed to all who had any sense of honor and justice to say whether, in this case, at all events, a Maori member of the House should be sacrificed to technical legislation, of which he could have had no knowledge. It was clearly the intention of the House, in bringing into operation the existing code of Standing Orders, that all legislation affecting the Maori race should be translated into the Maori language, so that they should have an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the law. Standing Order 355 provided,—

"Speeches addressed to the House by His Excellency the Governor, and Bills introduced into the House specially affecting the Maoris, are translated and printed in the Maori tongue for the information of Her Majesty's subjects of that race."

This Disqualification Act specially affected the Maoris.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—No.

Mr. STEWART.—The honorable member for Geraldine said "No;" but, if it did not, why was it sought to make them subject to it?

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Not specially.

Mr. STEWART.—Yes, specially. It would be a gross violation of justice to say that a Bill which so specially affected Maoris as this did, but which was not translated even when brought into force, should be held to apply to Maoris. The honorable member for Geraldine did not seem to agree with him; but he quite appreciated that honorable gentleman's high sense of justice in relation to this as well as to other matters. However, the point he wished to bring before the Speaker was one which would commend itself to the judgment of every independent member of the House, and that was, whether, if these Standing Orders had not been complied with, it would be fair or just, the House having transgressed its own rules, to set that Act in motion against a Maori member. He would like to know whether the Act ever had been translated into the Maori language.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had no information on the subject.

Mr. SHEEHAN thought this was the most extraordinary motion that had been brought forward for some time past. The gentleman who brought this petition forward had been spoken of very contemptuously a few months ago by his friends on that side of the House—he himself had heard that gentleman spoken of in the lobbies in a very slighting manner; but times had changed and men had changed, and now honorable members were invited, at the instance of that gentleman, to discuss a proposition to deprive the House of one of the best-behaved Maori chiefs in the whole colony, on a purely technical point. The honorable member for Wairarapa (Mr. Beetham) told the House that he had carefully picked out the Committee; and he (Mr. Sheehan) quite agreed with him. There was plenty of evidence as to the care shown by the honorable member, in the fact that on the Committee there were to

be five members from the Government side of the House and three from the Opposition. For a young member—not young in years, but young in taking part in these debates—he had shown wonderful discrimination; and he (Mr. Sheehan) should think such care would in time bring him to the front in his party. Now, what did the speech the House had just heard mean? This was the interpretation: “Hone Mohi Tawhai, we have discovered a technical flaw in your election: if you had come to our side, and had voted with us, we should never have raised a finger against you, but as you have gone over to the other side we are going to put the law in operation against you. Do not come into the House, or you will have to suffer a penalty of £50 a day. Hone Mohi Tawhai, please clear out until this division is over.” Now, that honorable gentleman had spoken in the House during the want-of-confidence debate, and said that he was a chief, and was going to vote like a chief; and he (Mr. Sheehan) now said he was a chief, and that he would vote like a chief. What were the facts? Until 1878 the Disqualification Act did not apply to the Maori members at all, and many who held seats in the House, and voted with the Government which existed before 1878, drew salaries while they were members, and when they left the House their salaries were converted into pensions. Dozens of cases could be cited to show that. He might mention the case of Tairaroa, who, while he remained a member of the House, drew a salary of £100 a year. Indeed, but for the fact of that being discovered just before he was called to the Upper House, he would have been disqualified. It was the “continuous Ministry” who set the example of paying salaries to members of the House; and, when the law was so altered as to prevent that state of things, there was not a single Maori who knew of the change. He confessed that, although a member of the Legislature which had passed the law, he had forgotten the change, and should not have remembered it had not Major Te Wheoro found it out just in time, and telegraphed announcing his resignation. The Act had never been translated into Maori, and the Natives were quite ignorant of it. As to the petition which had been referred to by the honorable member for Wairarapa, he (Mr. Sheehan) had intended to call attention to it himself, because it alleged he had sent certain telegrams to Hone Mohi Tawhai, which statements he had no hesitation in characterizing as absolutely untrue, as absolute falsehoods; and he defied the honorable member or any member of that House to produce a telegram of the kind.

MR. BEETHAM.—I did not say the telegram had been sent.

MR. SHEEHAN.—No; but the honorable gentleman made himself the vehicle for conveying that impression to the House.

MR. BEETHAM.—I merely quoted from the petition, but did not say the statements were true.

MR. SHEEHAN said, if a petition were given to him reflecting upon the conduct of another honorable member, he would have made inquiry as to the truth of its allegations before he

brought that petition before the House. Supposing a charge of forgery, or any such grave crime, were made in a petition, would it not be the duty of an honorable member, before calling attention to that charge, to get some evidence as to the truth of the statement—to get some evidence to show that there was at least a *prima facie* case? Certainly, the honorable member ought to have taken some such step before bringing this matter before the House, because the statement was absolutely untrue. He defied the production of a telegram of the kind. So far as he (Mr. Sheehan) was concerned, he would give the honorable gentleman leave to go to the telegraph office and search it. Although asked to assist in the election, he refused point-blank to interfere, and so in other cases. They had had a number of cases cited; but let the House go back awhile and look at the case of Karaitiana. They had heard talk about the Government influencing elections; but let the House look at the facts connected with that election. An honorable gentleman in the House had acted with him on that occasion who no doubt would oppose him in this instance; but he would nevertheless remember the facts. Witnesses came before the Committee which tried the allegations in that case, and said that they thought they were acting as “Returning Officers for the Government candidate;” and they actually went about the country getting persons’ names in a book, so as to save those persons the trouble of attending the poll to vote. There had been four Maori elections during the last six months, and he defied the honorable gentlemen opposite to produce one single instance in which the Government had influenced an election, although, as a matter of fact, they were entitled, as a party, to do all they possibly could. There had been a great deal of talk about using the “Hinemoa” for political purposes in the Government interest; but what had been done? He had taken the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District, and some of his supporters, in the “Hinemoa,” and landed them where they wished to be landed, for the purpose of carrying on their election. He had been asked to interfere in these elections, but had refused. The honorable gentleman ought not to have given currency to such statements until he had made inquiries, or without first coming to him and saying, “Here, Mr. Sheehan, are certain statements affecting you, to which I shall have to refer. You had better read them, so that you may be able to answer them if you choose.” That would have been gentlemanly conduct. No doubt, however, it was nothing more than an indiscretion on the part of the honorable gentleman, because, though he was an intense party man, he would not have wilfully taken an unfair advantage of an opponent. Still, it was to be regretted that he had not taken the course indicated. In the case of Karaitiana, it was also proved that in two instances no poll had been taken; yet the House held that, under the peculiar franchise of the Maoris, and seeing that there were thirty or forty polling-places, a small matter like that should not be allowed to interfere with the return. But what was the fact in this

Mr. Sheehan

case? A man who represented in his person the highest Maori blood of the country—and he stated that advisedly—a man who had been a public officer for many years, receiving the enormous salary of £50 per year, was to be rejected upon a mere technicality. Let the House go back for awhile. He had seen members of the House under the late Government getting £800 to £1,000 a year, and there was no discussion about it; yet this Maori, who knew nothing of the law—because he had not resigned his assessorship until after the election, though he did resign before the poll was declared—was to be made to suffer. The law had practically never been known to the Maoris, because the Act had never been rendered into the Maori language. And, indeed, as he said before, although he was a member of the House at the time, the provision would have been unknown to him except for the telegram he received from Te Wheoro. He might add it would be found that he had advised Te Wheoro not to give up his office at a good salary to come into the House; but he would not accept that advice. Unless the honorable gentleman would accept a reconstruction of the Committee, so as to make it a fair and impartial Committee, the Opposition would oppose the motion, and oppose it, as he believed, successfully. But, even if the Committee were appointed, and brought up a report adverse to the sitting member, he should move. That in the opinion of this House it would be a fair thing to bring in a Bill to remove the effects of this technical measure so far as Hone Mohi Tawhai was concerned. He would appeal to their sense of fair-play, and felt perfectly certain that unless the proposed Committee were reconstructed the motion of the honorable member for Wairarapa would not be passed. He said further that, even if they asked the House to disqualify Hone Mohi Tawhai on that special ground, he felt sure the House would direct them to bring in a Bill to make his election good. He trusted the honorable gentleman would reconstitute the Committee; otherwise he would oppose it tooth and nail.

Mr. WAKEFIELD must say that he was very much surprised at the tone adopted by the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) on an occasion of this kind. Until the honorable gentleman rose—or, rather, until the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) rose—he had no idea that there was any party heat connected with this matter. He knew nothing about this matter, except that he had heard that one of the Native members was an Assessor at the time he was elected, and that consequently he was liable to a penalty for every day he sat in the House, and was absolutely disqualified by law. He repeated the assertion that until the honorable member for Dunedin City rose he had no idea that this was being made a party question in any way, and he was very much astonished when the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) showed so much heat in connection with a matter which ought not to be dealt with from a party point of view. Surely, the question of whether disqualification should be strictly considered was much more important to the House than the

question of whether this party or the other should gain a temporary advantage in the House. This was not in the least a question of fair-play. It was simply a question of what was the law and what was the practice of the House. If the honorable member was disqualified it was absolutely necessary that some step should be taken in order that he might be removed from the House, or that the necessary means should be adopted to purge him of the disqualification by an amending Act. The contention of the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart), that this matter could not be gone on with because the Statute of 1868 had not been translated into the Maori language, was simply a ridiculous one. He had always observed that when a lawyer got up in that House to give them cheap law he always gave them very bad law. He was sure the honorable gentleman would never be at the head of his profession—as he boasted he was—if he dealt out such bad law to his clients as he had dealt out to the House. His opinion was not only not worth six-and-eightpence, but it was not worth three farthings. The fundamental basis of the law was, that everybody who was subject to the law was assumed to be cognizant of it. The honorable gentleman went on the understanding that no one was subject to the law unless he was acquainted with it. That was his argument—that the honorable member could not be made subject to the Disqualification Act because at the time when he became an offender under that Act he was not aware of the existence or of the provisions of the Act. Why, the honorable gentleman flew in the face of the fundamental principle of that particular branch of the law of which he himself professed to be the exponent. This Act was not an Act specially affecting the Maori race. It was quite obvious that the meaning of the word “special” was this: that the Act should affect the Maori race and not others. Now, this Act affected all classes of subjects, including members of the Maori race; and it was therefore a general Act, generally affecting the Maori race, but not specially affecting them as dividing them from their fellow-subjects in the country. He did not speak on this subject in the least in the position of an advocate—not the least in the world. All that he said was this: that it was the duty of the House at once, without any delay, to remove any person from the position of being liable to a penalty under the Disqualification Act. He thought it a most improper threat to the House for an honorable gentleman to say that, if the honorable member for the Northern Maori District were disqualified, he would prevent the disqualification taking place, and would prevent the report of the Disqualification Committee being carried out, and that he would by some motion or other, which he did not specify, absolutely keep in that House, in defiance of the law, a person who was not qualified by law to sit there. The honorable gentleman had no right whatever to make such a statement. He (Mr. Wakefield) felt quite confident that, let party feeling be as it might, that House would put its foot on any attempt the honorable gentleman might make to set aside the law of disqualification in respect to

members. The honorable gentleman might have seen also that, if he were able—as he (Mr. Wakefield) was convinced he was not able—to command a majority in the House in the direction of doing so wrong a thing as to obstruct the operation of the Disqualification Act, yet any person, no matter who, could issue a writ against the honorable member Hone Mohi Tawhai, and could recover £50 a day for every day he had sat in the House during this session, or for every day he might continue to sit; and the honorable member for the Thames would have no power over that person, who would be placed in the position of a suitor before the Courts by this Act. Why, the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) did actually issue writs in 1876 against the then Ministry. He declared that they were disqualified; and, although no attempt was made on the occasion to lay aside the Disqualification Act, the honorable gentleman did not trouble himself about a Disqualification Committee, but immediately went and issued writs against them, and put them to an enormous expense. That was in the memory of every honorable gentleman in the House; and the same course would be adopted in this case if any attempt were made by the honorable gentlemen opposite, from party motives, to prevent the operation of a law which was established, not for the benefit of any individuals, but for the good conduct and due dignity of that House as a legislative assembly. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) spoke in very strong and entirely uncalled-for terms of the action of the honorable member for Wairarapa (Mr. Beetham), with reference to a telegram which he was alleged to have sent to Hone Mohi Tawhai about the time of the election. The honorable member for Wairarapa never accused the honorable gentleman of sending any telegrams. He merely quoted from the report of Hirini Rawiri Taiwhanga, who stated that such a telegram had been sent, and mentioned it in connection with the retention of office by Hone Tawhai. The honorable member for the Thames declared that that was an insinuation against his character, and so forth. Why, he (Mr. Wakefield) should say it was quite a proper thing for the Native Minister to have done—to have sent a telegram to Hone Tawhai, warning him that he was an officer of the Government, and that he was therefore disqualified for standing for Parliament. It would have been a most proper thing to have done; and, so far from being an insinuation against his character, it was paying the honorable gentleman a very great compliment to suppose that he had had the good sense to send such a telegram to Hone Mohi Tawhai. If the statements which had been made in the petition of Hirini Rawiri Taiwhanga—and which had been repeated by the honorable member for Wairarapa—proved to be correct, it was quite clear to his mind that Hone Mohi Tawhai was disqualified from holding a seat in that House. Honorable gentlemen said, “Oh! but in the case of a Native!” In the case of a Native the law was just as strict, and properly so, as in the case of a European. What was done in the case of the first Maori election that was ever made to that House? Mete Kingi

Mr. Wakefield

Paetahi was elected for the Western Maori District in 1868. It was ascertained as soon as he came to Wellington that he was an Assessor at the time of his election, drawing a salary of exactly the same amount as that which Hone Mohi Tawhai was drawing. What did the late Sir Donald McLean do on that occasion? Did he come down and bounce the House, and rage at honorable members across the House, and tell them that, whatever the Disqualification Committee might say, he would see that the honorable member would retain his seat? Did he do anything so improper? Not at all. He came down to the House, and said, “Mete Kingi Paetahi is clearly disqualified by law from being elected to the House. He has not taken his seat; I have advised him not to take his seat; and I ask the House to pass an Indemnity Bill to meet his case.” The very first Act that was passed in the session of 1868 was the Mete Kingi Paetahi Election Indemnity Act; and the reason the late Sir Donald McLean then gave for asking that such a step should be taken was, that it was the first election of a Maori, and that it was unadvisable that it should be upset, no matter on how serious a ground. He made the Act a temporary Act, terminating at the close of that Parliament, and it was fully explained at that time that it was not to be made a precedent, but on the contrary was to deal with that particular case, because it was the first occasion when the Maori Representation Act was brought into force. Let honorable gentlemen look back to those facts, and then let them say whether the disqualification of a Native member should be made a party question or a question of mere sentiment. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) had no business to bring personal qualifications into the case at all. It was not a question of whether Hone Mohi Tawhai was a highly-respected and worthy chief—as he (Mr. Wakefield) believed him to be. He might have been the most disreputable and unworthy chief in the country—his case should have received the same consideration at the hands of the House. It was not a matter of personal sympathy with him (Mr. Wakefield). It was simply a matter of the interpretation of the Disqualification Act by that House. He hoped honorable gentlemen would not be led away by any ideas such as those suggested by his honorable friend, but that they would proceed to the appointment of the Committee, and allow the matter to be gone on with in the ordinary way. And he would say this: that if it could be shown to be right and desirable, no matter on what ground, that a short Indemnity Bill should be passed qualifying the honorable member Hone Mohi Tawhai for his seat, he would be the very first to assist in the passage of such a measure. He had no desire whatever to deal with this question in a party manner; and any honorable member who attributed any such motive to him made a statement he had no business to make. He hoped they would look to the future, and remember that at any time a question of disqualification might arise, and that, if they acted on this occasion from the mere party feeling of the moment, they would be sorry for it, and find themselves placed in a difficulty from which

they might save themselves by acting strictly in accordance with law and precedent on the present occasion.

Mr. HISLOP said he would move, by way of amendment, that the names of Mr. Stewart, Mr. Tole, Mr. Swanson, and Mr. Pitt be added to the Committee. He would say, with regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Geraldine, that, before that honorable gentleman took upon himself to correct the law laid down by any honorable member of that House, he ought to be sure that he himself was in a position to give a fair exposition of what the law was. He (Mr. Hislop) always understood that Bills which specially affected any particular individuals included Bills which took away from those individuals peculiar rights which they had under the law then existing. The Disqualification Act of 1876 contained a clause which specially exempted the Natives from the main provisions of the Act, but that section was repealed by the Act of 1878, which placed disabilities upon the Natives which had not previously existed; and he thought that, in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House, such a Bill ought to have been distributed amongst the Native people. He did not understand the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) to say that the provisions of the Act ought not to extend to the Maori people; he had merely urged that, on account of this omission, the motion before the House ought to be specially treated. The honorable member for Geraldine was quite right in stating that in 1868 a Bill was passed to indemnify a Maori member of the House, but that Bill was not only passed for the purpose of allowing an Assessor to be a member of the House, but to entitle him to continue to hold the office of Assessor which he then held. He regretted that the late Native Minister had spoken so warmly upon the subject, but he was justified on account of what was said by the honorable member for Wairarapa (Mr. Beetham). He was quite sure that the course suggested—namely, that the petition should be referred to a Select Committee, who should report upon the circumstances of the case, and also have power to report whether another election should take place—was the proper course to pursue. They knew very well that where there had been no intentional infringement of the law—where the infringement was merely technical—the best course was to cure the defect by passing an Indemnity Act. That had always been admitted by the House. If the honorable member for Wairarapa would accept the amendment he proposed, he would have much pleasure in supporting him.

Mr. TAINUI said he thought it was the duty of the Returning Officer, who was acquainted with the law, to have informed the candidates of the proper course to be adopted. Had the honorable member (Mohi Tawhai) understood the nature of the Act, he would have taken steps to put himself in a proper position by resigning the office of Assessor; but he had only recently learned that his election had been petitioned against. The Maoris were not yet thoroughly acquainted with the laws affecting elections.

Had these Acts been translated into the Maori language in the first instance, as pointed out by the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) this mistake would not have occurred. He agreed with the remark of the honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Hislop) that the non-compliance with the Act in this case should be overlooked because the return of the honorable member for the Northern Maori District was petitioned against on two grounds—namely, because he did not send in his resignation at the proper time, and because he had been guilty of bribery: two conditions incomprehensible to the Maori under the circumstances. He might inform the House that the petitioner in this case had stood for the district on three different occasions, and had not been elected. Perhaps the petitioner felt aggrieved on that ground, and had sent in the petition. He had been twice defeated when Wi Katene was elected, and now by Mohi Tawhai. If the election of Mohi Tawhai was declared null and void, and there was to be another election, he could safely say that Mohi Tawhai would again be elected, because he was a man who was thought a good deal of by the Northern people. There was another thing: Natives in the employ of the Government were generally appointed by the Maoris to conduct matters in their interest. That was why he considered it only fair that Acts relating to such matters as this should be translated into the Maori language. It would place a knowledge of the technicalities of the law within their grasp, and serve to avoid cases of this description arising in future elections. He blamed the Returning Officer in this case, because he knew that Mohi Tawhai was an officer of the Government. He would leave it to the House to consider whether it was fair to have this case decided according to the Act, or whether some leniency should not be shown towards Mohi Tawhai. He saw that during this session there were a number of petitions presented against the election of members—not only against the Maori members, but also against the European members.

Mr. MONTGOMERY wished to call attention to one point connected with the motion, which he thought was of considerable importance. The motion referred to "the allegations contained in the petition of Hirini Rawiri Taiwhanga," and he understood that one of the allegations was bribery. Could the Committee, when the petition had been presented in the usual form, inquire into that? Because, if it could not, then he held that the motion should be more specific.

Mr. SPEAKER thought that, if the petitioner endeavoured to establish bribery, it ought to be established in terms of the Act. The Committee could only inquire into the question of the sitting member being disqualified under the Disqualification Act through being a Native Assessor.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said he thought the motion should be amended. He did not know whether the honorable member for Wairarapa had consented to the addition of the names suggested by the honorable member for Waitaki.

Mr. HALL said he thought some arrangement would be come to.

Mr. MONTGOMERY, in order to make the motion more specific, moved the insertion of the following words: "That the allegation contained in the petition respecting the infringement of the Disqualification Act be inquired into." He did not dissent from the ruling of Mr. Speaker, but he thought it would be a very dangerous precedent to establish that during the session, and after the time had expired for presenting a petition against the return of a member upon the ground of bribery, any member should, upon a question of privilege, bring in a motion stating that a member had infringed the Disqualification Act, and that he had also been guilty of bribery; because, if it was proved that he had not infringed the Disqualification Act, he might be tried for bribery.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS thought that in discussing a question of this kind it was desirable that a clear view of the actual state of the law should be realized by honorable members. In this particular matter the House appeared to be not only the makers but the administrators of the law; and therefore, in both capacities, honorable members were bound, so far as they could, to endeavour to apply the law properly. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) said it was one of the fundamental rules of legislation that persons accused must be shown to possess a knowledge of the law. He was very much surprised at the honorable gentleman laying down the law in that way. No doubt the honorable gentleman had an infinitely greater knowledge of the law than he (Mr. Acton Adams) had. But he had always been taught that the guiding principle of the law on this point was, *Ignorantia legis neminem excusat*. He had never heard that ignorance of the law was a good excuse on the part of a person who had committed a breach of the law. Although in this nineteenth century he was not going to justify a principle which had been laid down as a part of our law for many hundred years, yet it was very easy to see the reason why this principle was laid down. Honorable members would recognize at once that it was impossible to interrogate the accused as to whether he was acquainted with the law or not. Although that could be done in France, still it was contrary to English law to interrogate an accused person. The honorable member for Dunedin City talked about its being a mere technical defect. If so, he, for one, would be most willing to pass any measure to overrule such a defect. But what was a technical defect? It was when the letter of the law was contravened, and not the spirit of it. The spirit of the Disqualification Act was this: It was intitled, "An Act to provide for the Purity of Parliament." That was the spirit of the Act—the sentiment of obtaining purity in our Parliament. Then the Act went on to say that persons in the employ of the Crown, and receiving a salary from the Crown, should not be qualified to become members of the House. That was a very broad principle, and the breach of it could not be considered a merely technical defect. There was no question in this case of the accused having been caught by any narrow or technical interpretation of particular words.

Mr. Hall

He thought that on no occasion more than the present should the House maintain the reasonableness and justice of the principle laid down, that the Crown and its servants should not be candidates for seats in this House. And he would go even further, and say that they should merely record their votes at elections, and not interfere in any way with those elections. That was an extension of the principle of the present law, which would be well understood as being, at all events, a truly moral one. The honorable member for Dunedin City appealed to the sense of justice of honorable members in this case. He (Mr. Acton Adams) thought honorable members' sense of justice would see that this particular principle was an equitable and moral one, and one which was thoroughly understood wherever a British Constitution existed—namely, that there ought to be equal laws for all subjects. That principle had, more than any other perhaps, gained a response from the inhabitants of this colony. Very many people had been, and were, contending that the laws should be the same for both Europeans and Maoris, and he certainly was one of those who believed in that principle. He also thought that if Maoris came into that House, and took part in legislation, and received honoraria as Europeans did, they should qualify themselves to the extent, at all events, of understanding the mode of getting into the House, and of conducting the business when there. Their presence there would be worse than useless if it led to discussion and delay in consequence of the Maoris not being acquainted with the laws. The honorable member for Dunedin City also cited the 355th Standing Order, which provided that Bills specially affecting the Maoris should be translated into the Maori language. Now, the word "specially" must mean something. It qualified the word "affecting." It was clear that this Act of 1870 did not specially affect the Maoris, as contradistinguished from Europeans. All classes of people, both white and brown, came under its provisions upon the same basis. There was no special reference to the Maoris so far as this particular matter was concerned, although he believed there was some reference to their holding seats in the Legislative Council. The Act laid down the principle that Civil servants and contractors of the Crown in the colony should not be eligible for election as members of the House, and there was nothing "specially affecting" the Maoris in that provision. That was the broad principle which the Statute disclosed, and he was surprised that an honorable gentleman belonging to the profession to which he (Mr. Acton Adams) had also the honor to belong should attempt to persuade the House that the meaning given by the honorable gentleman to this particular law was anything like the true meaning. It was urged also by the late Native Minister, as an excuse for the transgression of this law, that until 1878 the Act did not apply to Maoris. He would like to know how long that excuse was to last. In his opinion, the fact that the law had been lately passed and was fresh in their memories was the very reason why it should apply to the Maoris and why they should not be excused from coming under its provisions. The

honorable member petitioned against said that the petitioner had been three times a defeated candidate. That only proved that, when a Maori showed so much determination to get into the House, he would be a very good member when he got there. He believed Mr. Disraeli was defeated two or three times before he succeeded in obtaining a seat in the House of Commons, and his career since he obtained that seat fully justified what he (Mr. Acton Adams) said with regard to this petitioner. The honorable member for Akaroa raised the question of the petition containing an allegation of bribery, and urged that therefore it should be treated in the same way as ordinary election petitions, and not be received except under certain formalities. The answer to that was, simply, that the petition had been received. That also was a complete answer to the technical objections of the honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Hislop). As to the question of whether the Committee could investigate the allegation of bribery, he would point out that the Committee had simply to report upon the matter. The Committee had not to decide as to whether the present sitting member had a right to sit in the House or not. That was a matter which would have to be decided afterwards. If the Committee were to report that because of bribery the sitting member was disqualified, the report would, no doubt, not be supported by the House. The honorable member for Akaroa was quite right in saying that accusations of bribery could not be brought before the House except in the usual way, by election petition. The honorable gentleman was right, too, in keeping the matter within the Disqualification Act, but it was not likely that there would have been any departure from that. It had only to be pointed out to the members of the Committee, and they would have done their duty as members of the House and exponents of the law by only going into the question of whether, when this member was elected, he was a Civil servant. The Committee need not sit for more than five minutes to determine that point, because there were only two dates to be fixed—the date on which the member was elected to the House, and the date on which he ceased to be a Civil servant. If the latter was subsequent to the former, the honorable member was clearly disqualified. He trusted no party spirit would be shown in this matter. He was sorry to see that the honorable member for the Thames, and also the honorable member for Geraldine, had thrown so much party spirit into the question. It was merely a technical question affecting the privileges of the House, and as to whether one honorable member had a right to sit in the House. He would be no party to excluding any honorable member simply because he sat and voted on an opposite side; and he was sure the good sense of honorable members would lead them to agree with him in that view.

Mr. MOSS had only to remark that he differed from the last honorable gentleman who had spoken in his view of the case. No doubt the honorable gentleman's law was good; but this was not merely a legal question. There was another principle of law which must be borne

in mind when considering the matter, and that was, not only whether the offence was committed, but whether it was committed knowingly and wittingly. There were very few cases in which the law did not take that question into consideration. This was not an offence against any of the moral laws recognized throughout the civilized world. It rested on a pure technicality. At all events, it was unquestionably an offence committed in ignorance of the law, and without the slightest evil intent. However little that idea might weigh with lawyers, with laymen it would have considerable weight. They would not at once declare that a man was guilty of breaking the law and should be punished, unless it could be shown that there was some knowledge and wilfulness in his doing so. He did not care to go into the merits of the case; but he believed the decision of the House would be come to on broad principles of equity, and after full and impartial consideration. They would not be tied down to any mere narrow interpretation of the law, and would not come to a decision on a merely technical point.

Mr. STEWART wished to explain that the honorable member for Nelson City had slightly misapprehended what he said. He did not dispute that the law held ignorance to be no excuse, but there should be an opportunity given of knowing it, and the Roman jurists told them that there should be actual publication. In theory, the law was published in England, and, once published, no one was excused. His remarks were specially applicable to the Maoris here, where it was intended that there should be a translation. It was a mere quibble to take advantage of any general statement.

Mr. READER WOOD said that formerly, in the English House of Commons, when election petitions were presented, the only thing that a party required to know was the constitution of the Committee which was to try the case of the person petitioned against. As soon as ever they knew the constitution of the Committee, they knew perfectly well what the result would be. Now, if they applied the same principle to the constitution of this Committee, they also knew perfectly well what the result would be. There were five on one side, and three on the other. Votes at the present time were exceedingly scarce, and there was not the slightest doubt that five would preponderate over three, and out the honorable gentleman would have to go, law or no law, justice or no justice. This was precisely the line of argument pursued by the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Acton Adams). That honorable member said that they were to have here equal laws for the Europeans and Maoris, and that ignorance of the law was no excuse for any breach of the law. But if they were to have equal laws they must also have, he supposed, equal administration of those laws. He would ask the House to consider for a moment what course they had been in the habit of taking when questions of this kind cropped up; and they frequently had cropped up, for those Disqualification Acts from the very beginning had been regarded as, and had been, in fact, so many traps set to catch members.

They had seen lawyers in that House differing as to the meaning of certain clauses in those Acts, and they had seen a lawyer as eminent as Mr. Whitaker, the present Attorney-General, advising members who were in the Executive that they had committed no breach of the Disqualification Act, and yet they had after that to pass a Bill indemnifying them because they had committed a breach of the Disqualification Act in accepting offices to which certain fees were attached. Now, what did they do on that occasion? There was not the slightest difficulty in the House at all. The Indemnity Bill was passed, and, as the honorable member for Geraldine the other night stated that he (Mr. Wood) referred to that Act—

Mr. WAKEFIELD rose to a point of order. The honorable gentleman was referring to a previous debate, and it would be exceedingly inconvenient if he (Mr. Wakefield) were not allowed to reply.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honorable member could not refer to a previous debate.

Mr. READER WOOD was not referring to a previous debate. He was referring to a simple fact.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said the words used were "as stated by the honorable member for Geraldine the other night." The honorable member was trying to remove the impression he (Mr. Wakefield) then made, and it would be very unjust if he could not reply.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had already cautioned the honorable member for Waitemata against referring to a previous debate. No doubt that would be sufficient.

Mr. READER WOOD had no desire to refer to a previous debate. It was a matter of very slight consequence indeed. The honorable member for Geraldine prided himself upon his law, and always came before the House as a great lawyer; but he must say that the honorable gentleman was generally wrong in his law and wrong in his facts. The question was, How had the House usually treated this subject? First, with regard to the disqualification incurred by the honorable gentlemen who sat on the Government benches on the occasion to which the honorable member referred, there was no desire on the part of the House in any way to press the matter against them. The Bill of Indemnity was passed without the slightest difficulty, and there was not the rigour applied to them which the honorable member for Nelson proposed now to apply to this unfortunate Native who had got himself into this difficulty upon a purely technical point. If the honorable gentleman were receiving a salary at the present time, it was perfectly undisputable that there might be some strong feeling against him. The House would strongly object to his holding his seat for a single moment under those circumstances. But he believed the honorable gentleman had actually, verbally, resigned his appointment before he offered himself as a candidate, and the difficulty simply arose through his not resigning in writing. There had been other cases in the House where it was supposed that honorable members had in-

fringed these Disqualification Acts inadvertently, he believed. What did the House then do? Why, in 1875 it passed an Act the title of which was—"An Act to amend 'The Disqualification Act, 1878,' and to indemnify certain Members of the Legislative Council and House of Representatives from Disabilities and Penalties they may have incurred under that Act." That Act was the Act to which he had referred on a former occasion; and, if any one said that it was passed as a matter of course during a single sitting, he would reply that the first reading of that Bill was taken on the 8th October, the second reading on the 18th October, and the Act became law on the 21st October. There was very considerable debate on the subject, and the Act indemnified those gentlemen from any penalty that they might have incurred under the former Act. He would simply ask the House to deal out the same measure of justice to the Native member who had infringed, or was supposed to have infringed, the Disqualification Act of 1878 as it had done on all those previous occasions to other honorable gentlemen who had found themselves in this difficulty, and as, no doubt, it would do to other honorable members who might yet find themselves in the same position. It was quite true that the present Disqualification Act was by no means so stringent as former ones, and it was just possible members would escape; but it was hardly likely that they would. It was not at all unlikely that, on some future occasion, the same question would come under consideration with reference to themselves. He would be exceedingly sorry to see anything done now in a party spirit, for the mere sake of securing or preventing a vote in the House, drawn into a precedent, which might be used in a manner not now apparent.

Mr. HALL was very sorry to have heard so many allusions during the present debate to party spirit and action. It was a matter of extreme regret that, when an honorable member undertook the somewhat invidious task of bringing under the notice of the House the disqualification of another member—and it must always be an unpleasant and invidious task—he did not receive credit for good, upright, and honorable motives in doing so. He (Mr. Hall) asked the House generally not to deal with the question in a party spirit, but to rise above party spirit—to see what the facts of the case were, and decide upon them without any reference to party considerations. He assured honorable gentlemen that if they could find disqualification on the part of any honorable member on his side of the House, that side would not deal with it in a party spirit. The honorable member for Waitemata had followed in the wake of previous speakers by attempting to lead the House to believe that this case was on a par with many others which had been dealt with by the House. The honorable member referred to the Act of Indemnity passed to relieve Ministers in 1875, and the Act passed to relieve Mr. Harper. That gentleman was a solicitor in practice in Christchurch, and happened to hold the office of Revising Barrister to Friendly Societies. He was called upon to look

Mr. Reader Wood

over some rules once or twice in two years, for which he received a fee of a guinea or two guineas; and he had forgotten that he held such an office. The House, he thought wisely, said that that was not a case in which the honorable member ought to be expected to be fully aware of his disqualification, and that he ought not to be declared disqualified. Then, with regard to the case of Ministers, he denied the assertion of the honorable member for Waitemata that there was an absolute need for indemnity. To the present day the Attorney-General, Mr. Whitaker, maintained that there was no necessity for that indemnity. It was not a clear case of disqualification, but it was based on a very abstruse point which had never been raised before. There was no kind of analogy between the two cases. It was quite true that they had passed several Acts of Indemnity, and they had passed them because they felt that the Disqualification Acts in force at the time were not clear, not easily intelligible, and not sufficiently stringent. In order to avoid the necessity for repeating such an undesirable proceeding as passing Indemnity Acts, they amended the Disqualification Act, making it short, clear, and not too stringent. It was made so that every person could easily understand it. What did the present law say? It said that any officer drawing a salary from the Government was disqualified. It was the bounden duty of every person, and especially the bounden duty of every public officer who aspired to a seat in the House, to make himself acquainted with the law on this subject. So far as he could see, this was a case of clear, palpable disqualification, without any mitigating circumstances. The proposal before the House was merely that a Committee should be appointed, and honorable gentlemen who were objecting to that proposal were practically admitting the disqualification before the Committee had sat or considered the case. If such a case was not to be inquired into, they had better put the Disqualification Act into the fire, for it would be a miserable mockery, a delusion, and a snare. With regard to the Act itself, it had been contended that it specially affected the Maori race. One or two other contentions raised by the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) had been so fully and entirely disposed of by the honorable member for Nelson City that he need not go into them. It was quite true that there was a speciality in the Act, but it was in favour of the Maoris. It was not correct to say that attention had not been called to that clause in the Act. He knew that in the other branch of the Legislature it was fully discussed, and it actually formed the subject of discussion at a Conference between the two branches of the Legislature. It was fully considered as to how it was to apply to Maori members. Was it wise or expedient to exempt an honorable member because he belonged to the Native race? He did not mean anything disrespectful of the Natives—indeed, he was only stating that with which he believed those who had a very great regard for them would agree—when he said that they had not any keen sense of the impropriety of receiving increases

of salary from the Government when they ought not to receive them; and that, therefore, it was more necessary to be careful with regard to members of the Maori race than with regard to European members. The honorable member for Parnell said they ought not to enforce the provisions of the Act—that they ought not to be made applicable—unless the offences were knowingly and wilfully committed. The Act stated broadly that, if an individual, being a salaried officer of the Government, was elected a member of this House, he was disqualified. If, moreover, he sat and voted knowingly and wilfully, he rendered himself liable to a penalty of £50. Whatever the decision of the House might be, until this Act was repealed, if the honorable member knowingly and wilfully broke the law by sitting and voting in this House, he was liable to a penalty of £50 a day, at the suit of any person who might proceed against him. He did not say this in the way of a threat, but it was only fair that the honorable member should have the fullest warning. He would repeat his hope that the House would not deal with this question in a party spirit. If they were to have a Disqualification Act at all, it should not be a shadow, but a substance. If they did not mean to insist upon carrying out the Disqualification Act in so clear and palpable a case as this, they should put an end to the farce of passing Disqualification Acts, and wipe them out of the Statute Book altogether. He could not see any reason in the present case why the House should refuse the appointment of a Committee. The subject would come before the House again upon the consideration of the report. He understood the mover had made some arrangement with honorable gentlemen opposite as to the constitution of the Committee, and he presumed that there would be no objection to the motion.

Mr. DICK said it was with a feeling of disappointment and regret that he heard the honorable gentleman who spoke previously to the Premier express himself in the way he did. It seemed to him that the honorable gentleman's opinion of the House was very low indeed when he said that, law or no law, justice or no justice, the parties who were fighting on this subject would fight it to the end, or something to that effect. He would ask honorable members to consider this matter entirely without party feeling. He did not see why they should consider it as a party question at all. There were occasions when the House should rise above party altogether. When a question of privilege—a question affecting the House as to its privileges, its rights, and its regulations—came before them, they should forget that there were any parties, and merely consider what was fair and just in carrying out the law in connection with the House. This was an occasion on which they should adopt that course, and he, for one, did not care two straws whether the honorable member who was petitioned against was on the side of the House with which he himself was connected or on the other side. If the honorable gentleman sitting were on the same side of the House as himself he would just as readily support the consideration of the petition

as if the honorable gentleman sat with the Opposition. Honorable members should feel that this was a matter affecting the privileges of the whole House, and should not entertain the idea that they were fighting as parties upon it. He did not think the present was the time for fighting the question: the proper time would be when the report of the Committee on the petition came before them. It was perfectly right and reasonable that this question should be referred to a Select Committee. He did not think that any Committee appointed would deal with it as a party question. He believed that honorable gentlemen would take their position in that Committee considering that they were called upon to inquire into the privileges of this House, and would report honestly and fairly in the matter. He believed the Committee would do justice to the subject brought before them, and would bring the matter before the House in a fair and clear manner. Under these circumstances he did not see why they should continue debating this question, as it would come before the House again when the Committee submitted their report.

Mr. McLEAN had taken considerable interest in the Disqualification Act, and had assisted in getting an Act passed which would deal with all honorable members of the House alike. If the honorable member for Waitemata had his way he was afraid the justice that would be meted out to honorable members on the side of the House not supported by the honorable gentleman would be scant. They would be served as he (Mr. McLean) had himself been served when he had to pay costs on a writ served on him at the instance of the honorable member for Christchurch City (Sir G. Grey). The honorable gentleman said that the present Attorney-General had given it as his opinion that an Indemnity Act was necessary in that case. The present Attorney-General had never advised that an Indemnity Act was necessary. The honorable gentleman was of opinion that they were not disqualified in any way, and he held the same opinion still. It was said that there was no difficulty in passing the Indemnity Act. The honorable member for Parnell seemed to forget that they sat up all night endeavouring to prevent the passing of the Act. The honorable member for Dunedin City, who, no doubt, was disappointed at not obtaining the Attorney-Generalship, had shown them the kind of law he would give if the matter of disqualification were placed in his hands as Attorney-General. He (Mr. McLean) had simply to say that so far as he was concerned the Disqualification Act should apply to all alike, without any distinction whatever. He wished to see the law carried out. He would be quite satisfied with the decision at which the Committee arrived.

Mr. GISBORNE would like to consider the question in a spirit quite devoid of party feeling; but he must say that the speeches of the Premier and the honorable member who had just spoken were not calculated to conduce to such a spirit. There was a speciality in this case which he hoped the Committee, if appointed, would consider. When the Disqualification Act of last

Mr. Dick

year was passed, it imposed a special disability on the Native race. He would show how.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

On the House resuming,

Mr. SPEAKER directed the Clerk to call on the Orders of the day.

Mr. BEETHAM said he should like the ruling of Mr. Speaker as to whether the question of privilege which had been discussed during the afternoon should not be gone on with now, instead of the Orders of the day. That was his understanding of the course of procedure. He was not then in a position to quote precedents in support of his view; but, to the best of his recollection, during the session of 1877, when a debate on a question of privilege was commenced, and was not finished when the hour of half-past five arrived, it was continued at the evening sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER thought it very much depended on whether the question of privilege involved a matter of immediate urgency. He did not think there was pressing urgency in the present case; but, next day being a Government day, the Government would be able to allow it to stand as the first business, if they thought it necessary, or else allow it to come on after the Orders of the day had been disposed of to-day. He regarded the two hours' interval as an adjournment, and thought this question of privilege might be adjourned from day to day; and with regard to its being entitled to precedence, it had been held, in some cases of privilege of a less urgent character, that adjourned debates were not entitled to precedence.

Mr. HALL said that if the matter could either be gone on with as the first business next day, or at any other time, it might not be a matter of urgency; but otherwise he took it that, as it was a matter which affected the right of a member to sit and vote, it was a matter of urgency; and, to his mind, it was highly inexpedient that a question of such importance should be allowed to stand over. Perhaps that view had not suggested itself to Mr. Speaker.

Mr. READER WOOD said he agreed entirely with the ruling of Mr. Speaker that this was simply an ordinary notice of motion, and that, when the hour of half-past five was past, the House must proceed to the Orders of the day. The Premier seemed to think it was a matter of inconvenience, even if in accordance with the rules of the House; but inconvenience sometimes had to be suffered in consequence of the rules of the House. For instance, there was a want-of-confidence motion which could not be gone on with at all. What was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. He believed that Mr. Speaker had adopted the proper course.

Mr. McLEAN would like to bring to the recollection of Mr. Speaker the course of procedure adopted when a question of privilege was raised in consequence of a dispute between the House and the Government in reference to the appointment of Mr. Wilson to the Legislative Council. His recollection of what occurred on that occasion

was that, when the hour of half-past seven arrived, the matter having been discussed in the afternoon, it was ruled by the Speaker that the debate must continue. There was no matter of urgency involved in that. It could have stood over for several days. But this was a matter of urgency, because it must affect the seat of an honorable member of this House. It affected very seriously that member, because by sitting and voting here he subjected himself to a certain penalty for every day he so sat and voted, and of this fact he had got notice. Therefore he regarded this question as a matter of urgency.

Mr. SHEEHAN would point out that the question of privilege referred to by the honorable member for Waitemata was a dispute between this House and one of the other estates of the realm. That was a matter of urgency; but the same could scarcely be said of this case. This petition had been lying on the table for several days, and had the honorable member for Wairarapa chosen he could have moved in the matter earlier. He submitted that the ruling of Mr. Speaker was perfectly correct.

Mr. SPEAKER said that the 51st Standing Order provided, "If, on the days on which motions have precedence, all motions shall not have been disposed of when the House rises at half after five o'clock, the debate on any motion under discussion is adjourned by Mr. Speaker, and the House on resuming at half after seven o'clock proceeds to the Orders of the day." Of course, if he were empowered to set aside that Standing Order, this motion could be gone on with; but he believed both sides of the House expected him, in the present circumstances of business, to administer the Standing Orders rigidly, and he intended to do so.

Mr. ROLLESTON presumed that, in the event of the adjourned debate not being resumed after the Orders of the day have been disposed of, it would devolve upon the Government to fix what position the motion should occupy upon the Order Paper of the next day. It was a question affecting the privileges of the House, not the privileges of the Government, and it would be putting the Government in an invidious position to leave to them the question of deciding when the matter should again come up for discussion.

Mr. GISBORNE said the Premier was leader of the House as well as leader of the Government; and to him the privileges of the House should be as much a matter of concern as the convenience of the Government. His own idea of what was right must guide him as to what course he should adopt.

Mr. BRANDON thought the point as to urgency was of very little importance, because, so long as the honorable member sat and voted, he rendered himself subject to a penalty of £50 per day.

Mr. MURRAY pointed out that the 86th Standing Order provided that, "An urgent motion, directly concerning privileges of the House, will take precedence of other motions, as well as of Orders of the day." He thought, therefore, that this matter should take precedence of the Orders of the day according to that Standing Order, be-

cause the privileges of the House were undoubtedly affected. Suppose there were half a dozen or twenty members sitting in the House who had no right to sit there, the proper decision of the House on important subjects might be very seriously affected. In this instance it might determine whether one party or another was to rule the House. Therefore the matter ought to be considered carefully, in view of the principle at stake. It was to be hoped, in view of the principle at issue, that honorable members would divest themselves of party feeling in considering the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER, before calling on the Orders of the day, said that of course the matter might be gone on with at once if there was no objection on the part of honorable members in charge of the Orders of the day, and the House generally, to those Orders being postponed. He was quite in the hands of honorable members, and had no personal feeling in the matter.

AUCKLAND IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS TRANSFER OF POWERS.

Mr. W. J. HURST, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he would explain as briefly as possible the necessity for the Bill. In 1875 a body termed the Improvement Commissioners was created in the City of Auckland to administer a certain trust—a large and valuable property within the City of Auckland; in fact, it has been a body exercising a sort of *imperium in imperio* in the middle of a large city. The Improvement Commissioners had certain large definite powers, which they endeavoured to carry out. It had been found, however, that, instead of being in a position to carry out those powers, the revenues were considerably short of the expenditure. In 1877 he endeavoured, when Mayor of the City of Auckland, to induce the Commissioners—of whom he was one at that time in virtue of his office—to transfer the trust. He pointed out to the Commissioners their inability to fulfil the trust conferred upon them; but at that time the city was indisposed to take over the property with such a burden as appeared to be attached to it. Since then a large majority of the Commissioners had seen the inutility of further endeavouring to carry out the objects of the trust, and the result was, that the City of Auckland had agreed to have this Bill brought before the House, in order that they might take over the responsibilities now in the hands of the Commissioners. He might mention that there was no question of principle involved in the Bill. It was simply a transfer of administration to a responsible body—the Corporation of the City of Auckland. There was, however, one circumstance connected with this measure which he thought it wise at once to mention, and that was, that the Provincial Council of Auckland, at that time trusting to the advancement of the colony and believing in the great value of this property, passed a Bill reserving the residuary interest, after the Commissioners had fulfilled their trust, for the purposes of education. The Education Board of Auckland, having regard to that residuary interest, had petitioned the House on the

subject, which petition was now under the consideration of the Public Petitions Committee. Therefore that question would be considered by the Committee, and in another form would come up before the House. He dared to say that due weight would be attached to the decision of that Committee, and that the Committee would enter into the full details of the matter. The whole question involved between the Education Board—acting, no doubt, in the interest of education, and, he believed, on behalf of the Government,—and the City Corporation was simply as to the property the Board was to have handed over to it. The present position of the matter was this: that the Improvement Commissioners could not carry on. They had now an indebtedness of £25,000, and were paying a large sum in the shape of interest. They had placed in the hands of a monetary institution debentures which they were unable to float at a higher value than £65. The Education Board, of course anxious to have as much as they could get, had made a demand on the City Council which the Council were not prepared to accede to; and, on the other hand, the City Council made certain offers which the Education Board virtually declined to accept. Therefore it was submitted to the House to some extent to settle the dispute between these two bodies. The Petitions Committee would, of course, go into the whole details on this part of the question, and place their recommendation on the table of the House. Therefore it became more a matter of formality than principle to go on with the second reading of the Bill. He would then move its committal—possibly a week hence; and, if the Committee had not sent in their report on the petition by that time, he would undertake to the House to further postpone the committal of the Bill. He would not trouble the House with any further remarks. There was no principle whatever involved—simply a change of the trust from one body to another. In his opinion, it would have been wise if this trust had been handed over to the city in the first instance. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ROLLESTON would like to know if this Bill would be referred to the Waste Lands Committee. He had only just seen the Bill. There was no doubt that a measure of this kind should be examined carefully. Honorable members generally, he thought, had only just had the Bill placed in their hands. The Bill was one involving interests of so large a character that he thought it should be submitted to an inquiry which would satisfy the House generally as to its provisions. He should be very glad to give his attention to it.

Mr. KELLY said the petition referred to by the honorable member for Auckland City West was at present under the consideration of the Public Petitions Committee, and no doubt that Committee would make full inquiry, and inform the House exactly as to how the matter stood. He would support the motion for second reading now, on the understanding that the Bill should not be committed until after the Committee had brought up its report.

Mr. HAMLIN would like to state that, al-

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though he did not oppose the Bill on the present occasion, he did not wish it to be understood that he swallowed the Bill holus-bolus. Some honorable members, including himself, had received letters urging them to oppose this Bill. He would not oppose the second reading; but he wished the honorable member for Auckland City West to understand that, unless he was fully satisfied with it, he should take every opportunity of opposing its third reading.

Mr. MOSS wished to say, as the member intrusted with the petition from the Education Board, that he should not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but it was on the distinct understanding that it would not be pushed on in Committee for some time to come. Honorable members should have ample time to look into it, and care must be taken that the interests of education did not suffer. That was the only object of the petition, and the only object which the Education Board had in view.

Mr. HURST, in reply, regretted that he had failed to make himself understood by the Minister of Lands. He said most distinctly that there was no principle involved in the Bill, that the petition of the Education Board was already in the hands of the Petitions Committee, and that he would not move the committal of the Bill until Wednesday next, and not then if the Committee had not reported on the question. He did not think the House could ask him to say anything more than what he had already explained. He regretted that the honorable member for Franklin should have made the observations he did, because he was quite satisfied that the Board of Education was not opposed to the Bill itself.

Mr. HAMLIN said it was from a member of the Board of Education that he received his information on the subject, and he held a letter in his hand urging him to oppose the Bill.

Mr. HURST said it was useless taking up the time of the House, which, he had no doubt, would be greatly influenced by the Government on the one part, and the decision of the Petitions Committee. It was a matter of dispute and difference of opinion between the two bodies of so trivial a character that the House and the Committee would be able to deal with it in a proper manner. He would now simply content himself with moving the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

WAIUKU RECREATION RESERVE BILL.

Mr. HAMLIN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, explained that its main feature was to vest this reserve in a body of trustees, who would improve and manage it. Honorable members would recollect that a portion of this ground was reserved by the late Provincial Government, and had been granted to the people of Waiuku as a drill-ground. Since then several acres had been added to it as a reserve; but up to the present time no trustees had been appointed for the purpose of managing it. They had been in the habit of holding cattle shows and annual races there; and they were anxious that the whole affair should be vested in a body of trustees, and that they should have the privilege, on annual show

and race days, to impose an entrance fee on people who might wish to go on the ground. Further than that, the trustees would simply be there as a Board to improve this reserve. The greatest portion of it was fern and tea-tree, with the exception of the course and show-ground. In order to retain the ground as a drill-ground, most of the trustees were members of the local Volunteers, so that no danger need be anticipated by the House or the Government that their right would in any way be set aside. He thought honorable members would find that this Bill was in accordance with most measures of this character. They had in years gone by passed several of these measures, and he trusted the House would allow this Bill to be read a second time.

Mr. HALL said it was no doubt very desirable that a property of this kind should be vested in local trustees, but, in consequence of the numerous applications that were made to Parliament for special Acts vesting reserves in local trustees, the Legislature made provision in "The Public Reserves Act, 1878," by which the Governor was enabled by Order in Council to vest land of this kind in local trustees. Perhaps the honorable gentleman would state why the vesting in the present case could not be done under that Act. If there was any special reason why it could not be so done, no doubt the House would be glad to entertain the present proposal; but, if it could be done, it would be a bad precedent to disregard the Act passed for the special purpose of relieving the Legislature of work of this kind. He would not oppose the second reading on the present occasion, but he hoped the honorable gentleman, before they went further, would be able to show why it was necessary to pass by the Public Reserves Act and introduce a special measure.

Mr. MURRAY submitted that the Bill should be allowed to be read a second time. If the Public Reserves Act made provision for this case, the Bill need not be proceeded with further.

Mr. KELLY was under the impression that the Government, under the Public Reserves Act, only had power to deal with land that had been reserved for a certain purpose named in the schedule of the Act, and vest it in local governing bodies. This land might not be in that position: it might be land reserved from sale for other public purposes, and might therefore not come under the Act of 1878, but be required to be dealt with by special Act.

Mr. ANDREWS did not intend to enter into the particulars of this Bill, but there was one point to which he desired to allude, and that was the constitution of the proposed Board. As a member of that House he would always strenuously oppose the appointment of Boards of this description. He thought it was a move in a backward rather than in a forward direction. It would not, in his opinion, satisfy the members of the House, nor be acceptable to the people who were affected. He would take that opportunity of informing the House that he would oppose the appointment of this Board, as he would every Board nominated in the same way. He wished in all things to see the power put in the

hands of the people, who should themselves be able to elect trustees to take charge of land intended for their welfare.

Mr. HAMLIN said the Bill was introduced on the advice of persons who were supposed to know all about the matter—the Waste Lands Department, and other people in Auckland—who stated that the object could not be attained except by having a separate Bill passed through Parliament. With reference to the remarks of the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews), who appeared to be so greatly alarmed at the names of the trustees being mentioned in the Bill as to lead to the supposition that they had been pitchforked into the clause, or quietly selected in some hole-and-corner fashion, he could assure the honorable gentleman that the names of the proposed trustees were inserted at the desire of the people of the district. They were gentlemen who had taken the liveliest interest in all matters connected with the district; and the inhabitants in the neighbourhood had every confidence that, if this measure were passed, the ground would be taken care of, all rights properly conserved, and everything done for the benefit of the place.

Bill read a second time.

SUPPLY.

Major ATKINSON.—Understanding from you, Sir, that I shall now be in order in doing so, I desire to ask the House to suspend the Standing Orders for the purpose of passing a Supply Bill through all its stages, and passing a resolution in Committee of Supply to enable the Government to issue the extra £200,000 worth of deficiency bills which were authorized by the Act passed the other day. I have communicated with my honorable friends opposite to know whether they would take advantage of our going into Committee of Supply to bring forward a motion which I understand you to rule that, notwithstanding the suspension of the Standing Orders, they would have the power of submitting to the consideration of the House. That being your ruling, Sir, of course it will be open to any honorable gentleman, on the question being put that you do leave the chair for the purpose of going into Committee of Supply, to move any amendment he may think right. If that is the case, and my honorable friends are not prepared to assure me that they will not take advantage of that position, I shall, of course, be unable to proceed with the motion of which I gave notice, because the object for which I gave notice would be defeated—namely, the passing of a Supply Bill this evening without further discussion; because it is quite certain that the motion which those honorable gentlemen would submit would be of a character, considering the present state of parties in the House, which would necessitate probably many days' discussion. Therefore it would only be anticipating the motion that we now have on the Paper; and my honorable friends on these benches do not think it would be advisable to anticipate business that is on the Paper in that way. But, as this money is imperatively required in the interests of the country—as it will be impossible to make any further payments if both these measures are not

passed this evening, for there is now at the credit of the Consolidated Fund only £40,000—as this money is imperatively required for the public service, and also for paying the subsidies, for which I am very much pressed by the whole of the counties and Road Boards, I trust honorable gentlemen will accede to the proposition which I have made, and agree that we shall proceed to the consideration of these Bills on the distinct understanding that no motion will be moved upon the question that you leave the chair. If the honorable gentlemen are not prepared to give me that assurance, then the responsibility of refusing supplies must rest upon them.—(No, no.)—At any rate, it must rest upon some shoulders—the public will have to decide upon whose. No doubt the honorable gentlemen opposite will say it rests upon our shoulders. Well, we are prepared to take the blame, if it does; and if it rests on their shoulders they must take the blame. At any rate, we are not going to be led into a trap by the honorable gentlemen. We intend to carry out what we have already stated to this House. So soon as we have had proper time to submit our measures to Parliament we shall be prepared to discuss this motion of no-confidence; but we shall not be prepared to give the honorable gentlemen a special opportunity this evening for that purpose. I have stated the reason why I want these two measures: it is to enable me to carry on the public service, and to pay the subsidies which are now being demanded from all round the country. So far as I know, it has been the invariable custom of honorable gentlemen, on both sides, whatever might be the state of the House, to facilitate the passage of Supply Bills through this House. On a late occasion, the members of the present Government, when in opposition, gave every such facility, and I trust and believe that the honorable gentlemen opposite will do the same on the present occasion; but, if not, as I said before, I will not trouble the House with any further remarks on the subject.

Mr. MACANDREW.—There is no intention whatever on this side of the House to obstruct the granting of supplies. We are quite ready to grant any reasonable supply at once. At the same time, unless the honorable member gives an assurance that my motion, No. 20, will be allowed to come on to-morrow, it is my intention to propose or to state a grievance, at all events, on going into Committee of Supply. We do not intend to have any discussion upon it, but to go into Committee of Supply at once. But I decline to accept the responsibility for any consequences that may result from not going into Supply to-night. If any evil consequences result, the responsibility must be entirely on the shoulders of the honorable member and his colleagues. I repeat, that we are prepared at once to grant supplies, but, unless we get an assurance that the no-confidence motion will be allowed to come on some time to-morrow, it will be my duty to make a short statement in the way of a grievance when the question is put that you do leave the chair. I hope the honorable gentleman will accept that assurance as satisfactory.

Major ATKINSON.—I am obliged to the

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House for having heard what I had to say. Of course, after what has fallen from the honorable gentleman, I should not think of proceeding with the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. HISLOP.—Might I be allowed to make a motion? In order that there may be no imputation against this side of the House, I propose the suspension of the Standing Orders, so that the Colonial Treasurer may have an opportunity of introducing his measures.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think it is competent for the honorable member to take that course, which would imply his undertaking charge of Government business.

Mr. MACANDREW.—It is perfectly clear now, Sir, that the sooner we adjourn the better. If the Government is not in a position to control the House and go on with its business, I do not see why we should stay longer. I beg to move, That this House do now adjourn. I am very sorry to have to do so, but I wish it to be distinctly understood, and iterated and reiterated, that the Opposition does not desire to block supplies. We are prepared to grant them at once, and on those gentlemen's heads will rest the responsibility of any evils that may result from supplies not being granted.

Major ATKINSON.—I would merely remark, in regard to what has fallen from the honorable gentleman, that the block comes entirely from the other side.—(No.)—The honorable gentlemen know perfectly well that, if they move any motion which will be of any service to them at all, it will be a motion which is condemnatory of the Government. Well, Sir, that being the case, it is perfectly certain that the Government will desire to place its case before the country. It will take us several days to do that. It will take the honorable gentlemen opposite several days to show our iniquities. Therefore it is absurd for those honorable gentlemen to say they are prepared to grant supplies. They are prepared to seize this opportunity of discussing the fitness of the Government to sit on these benches. Well, Sir, the House has decided, and the mismanagement of those honorable gentlemen has decided, that that motion shall not come on at present. When we shall feel it our duty to bring it on now, after the conduct of the honorable gentleman, of course is a matter for our consideration; but I can assure honorable gentlemen that that obstruction will not move us a bit. We have laid down lines for ourselves, and we shall follow them, so long as we see that we are receiving the support of the party who have put us in power, and who demand that we shall commit to this House and to the country the measures which we have been intrusted by His Excellency to prepare.

Mr. TURNBULL.—So far as I understand the remarks of the honorable member for Port Chalmers there is no refusal to grant supplies. I think the honorable gentleman made that very clear. There was certainly a condition attached to his observations, and that was, that the Premier should give him an opportunity to bring on his want-of-confidence motion to-morrow. Honorable

members are perfectly well aware that if a member has a grievance he has a perfect right to bring it on for discussion on the motion for going into Committee of Supply; and really I do not see why a majority of the members of this House should sit here at the will of the minority, and have the business impeded. The honorable member for Port Chalmers has stated distinctly that, if the Government will give him an assurance that the want-of-confidence motion shall come on tomorrow, supplies will immediately be granted; so that, if there is any obstruction, they are themselves to blame for it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I hope it will be clearly understood by this House and the country that there is not a single member of the Opposition who would refuse to grant supplies. I can say for myself that I would not allow any party tactics to induce me to vote against supplies being granted. The honorable member for Port Chalmers has stated, as he has a perfect right to state, that he has a grievance, and surely it is the right of every member, on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, to ask to have that grievance redressed. The nature of that grievance may be stated in a few words; but the Colonial Treasurer will not himself move that the Standing Orders be suspended, because he fears that that grievance will be stated. I trust it will be clearly understood that the Opposition are willing to grant supplies without hesitation.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honorable gentleman is rather contradictory. He first states that he will be no party to refusing supplies, and he then proceeds to say that he will block supplies.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I did not say that we would block supplies. I said that we would grant supplies, but that we should state our grievance first.

Mr. McLEAN.—I put the interpretation upon the honorable gentleman's remarks which I think the country will put upon them. It is useless to say you will grant supplies, but that you must first state a grievance. Everybody knows what that means. It might take three weeks to debate that grievance. The Government are prepared to discuss it at an early date, but they are determined that they will first put before the country a statement of their policy. The honorable gentleman is going to bring on a want-of-confidence motion; and because he cannot have his own way he has stopped the business of the House night after night. He has even prevented the business of private members coming on, in a manner which does not reflect credit upon himself or upon his side of the House. I have no objection to adjourn. I am sure the country will know where to place the responsibility.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I hear a great deal about blocking the business of the House, but surely the honorable gentlemen on the Ministerial benches do not forget what they did last session. Do they not remember saying, "Unless the Government make the election writs returnable in thirty days, we will not grant supply;" and do they not remember that Sir George Grey had to give a solemn pledge that he would do so?

We ask the Government now to give that which they formerly refused to give—fair-play.

Mr. WHITAKER.—Our side have not that dictatorial spirit which characterizes the Opposition, or we should say, as the honorable member at the head of the Government last session said, "You *shall* grant supplies." We do not say that, but we do say that we will leave the country to give the verdict upon the question whether we or the Opposition are responsible for the obstruction of the public business. The Government say that the money is required for necessary payments; and, when it is known that the Opposition have refused to grant supplies, those people who have to go without their money will certainly retaliate upon those honorable gentlemen.

Mr. READER WOOD.—Sir, if the Colonial Treasurer would only do what the honorable member for Waipa tells him to do, we should at once grant supplies. There is no difficulty in the way whatever. I say, absolutely, that I would be no party whatever to the refusal to grant supplies. But what course does the honorable gentleman who is leading the House on this question of finance ask us to adopt? He asks us to abandon one of the first privileges of members of this House. It is a right divine that, on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, questions may be put one after the other in order that grievances may be ventilated; and when the honorable member for Port Chalmers asks the Colonial Treasurer to give him an assurance that a particular motion will be discussed tomorrow, the Treasurer accuses him of stopping supplies. Why, Sir, the honorable gentleman cannot prevent me from ventilating a grievance if this assurance is given. The plain fact is, the honorable gentleman is himself afraid to bring forward his motion for supply. And yet the matter is very simple. If he has a majority, he can carry the day without any difficulty whatever; and, if we have a majority, why should not we assert that majority? We are ready to grant any reasonable supplies the honorable gentleman may ask for; but we are not going to allow a precedent to be established which will preclude honorable members of this House, upon the motion that the Speaker do leave the chair in order that the House may go into Committee of Supply, from bringing forward an amendment of any sort for discussion, as they have a perfect right to do. Supply is never shut out by an amendment—it can always come up; so that the Colonial Treasurer is misleading the House when he tries to make us believe that, if an amendment on the motion for going into supply is agreed to, supply is shut out. We are anxious to grant supply and give the honorable gentleman every shilling he wants.

Mr. BOWEN.—The honorable gentleman is trying to mislead the House as to this attempt to stop supplies. It is no doubt a rule of the House and of Parliament that on going into Committee of Supply every member of the House may air a grievance; but I defy him to show any case of modern date in which the House of Commons has attempted literally to stop supplies.

It is one thing to bar going into Committee of Supply when supplies are granted, as they are in England, in advance, while there is money in the Treasury, and before payment is absolutely necessary: it is another thing to bar supplies when there is absolutely no money voted for carrying on the business of the country. This is a thing that has not been attempted before within the memory of any member of this House. It has been usual to meet the Government by allowing them to take imprest supplies to meet necessary payments; but this attempt is absolutely unparalleled. And by whom is it attempted? Not by an acknowledged majority of this House, but by a party who have just been beaten, and who, according to the last party division, were in a minority, defeated on a charge of maladministration. And for a party of this sort, before a division is taken to show what their position is, to come down and say that, if their will is not to be the law of the country—is not to be the law of Parliament—then no payments shall be made—are we to tolerate that sort of thing? And because we will not, they say they have a grievance. Now, every one knows what their grievance means. It means that they are going to bring on, in some shape or other, the question whether the Government is fit to occupy those benches. Of course everybody knows that that will lead to a long and serious debate in present circumstances; yet they say they will, in a manner unparalleled in the history of the country, stop the payments which are necessary for the conduct of the business of the country. Well, Sir, I think the country can better afford to wait a few days than to allow a party in this House to outrage all parliamentary precedent by attempting a dictation which ought only to be allowed to an absolutely-declared majority of the representatives of the people. There is no such declared majority at present in the House; and I say that, rather than that we should yield to the dictation of a faction, it is better that this colony should incur the inconvenience they are causing. The country will know quite well where the responsibility lies. I say the responsibility lies with the men who are not prepared to allow the Government which has charge of the business of the country to lay their policy before the country, to lay the statements which they say they are ready to make before the country, and who try to hurry that Government in such a way that they should be obliged to prepare their business and make their statements in a scant and imperfect manner. My honorable friends, I am quite sure, will not be forced from the position they have taken up; and the honorable gentlemen opposite must take the responsibility of the unparalleled course they have attempted to-night.

Mr. HISLOP.—I think the responsibility for this unparalleled course will not weigh very heavily on the members of the Opposition. The great Constitutional party, who now have taken upon themselves, without the consent of the majority of this House, to rule the country, have assumed office for the avowed purpose of upholding constitutionalism, and to carry out those high principles so frequently advocated by the honor-

able gentleman who has just sat down; and yet they have not been in office a week before they attempt to set aside those very constitutional principles which are most adaptable to the institutions of this country. The first principle of constitutional government which they deny us is, that the majority of this House have a right to say whether persons appointed by the Governor to take seats on those benches as his Responsible Advisers have or have not the confidence of the country. The next principle of constitutional government which they deny us is the right to take advantage of the only way we have got of approaching the Crown for the purpose of stating the grievances we may suffer from. If there is one thing more than another which shows the emptiness of the pretences which those honorable gentlemen make to constitutional morality and practice, it is their conduct in the past. If there is anything which shows more than another the utter incapacity of that side to rule under constitutional principles, it is the stupid reasons they have bandied about in connection with the proceedings which have taken place in the House. I say they have no right to impute to this side of the House blame for what has taken place. It is the direct consequence of their own acts. The honorable gentleman who has just sat down has enunciated the principle that the Ministry on those benches have a right to demand a fair trial. I defy the honorable gentleman to show me any precedent, since constitutional government was instituted in England, bearing out that statement.

Mr. BOWEN.—1834.

Mr. HISLOP.—I do not know the case to which he refers, in 1834, but I heard a case mentioned yesterday which occurred in 1867 and 1868. It was mentioned by an honorable gentleman who has set himself up as a great constitutional authority—the honorable member for Grey and Bell. But everybody who knows anything about the occurrences of that time knows perfectly well that that was a case analogous to the case here last session. An adverse vote on principle was carried against the Ministry, and they tendered their resignation to the Queen, who refused to accept it, asked them to continue in office, and granted them a dissolution. That is somewhat similar to what occurred last session, and has no parallel in the case this session. The only difference between the case in England and that of last session here was that, although the Opposition—in which were Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, from whom the honorable member for Kaiapoi, if he professes to be a Liberal, should gather his precedents, rather than from the Conservatives—though these gentlemen animadverted upon the conduct of Ministers, still they granted supplies without any of those conditions which the present Government when in opposition attempted to impose upon the late Ministry last session. I say that, whatever differences we may have as to the minor principles of government, there should be none in this respect: that the majority of this House ought to rule. The late Ministry, obedient to that principle, resigned their offices; but will any person pretend to say

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that the majority of the House at that time or at any other time were in favour of the present Premier forming a Ministry? That is the question which every member who wishes to come to an honest conclusion upon this subject should ask himself; and I believe that every member who asks himself that question will answer it in the negative. Then those honorable gentlemen took their seats; and now they demand from the House a fair trial. Well, they are entitled to a fair trial; but who are to be judges of what a fair trial is? Are the judges to be the six honorable gentlemen who have taken their seats on those benches, or are they to be the majority of this House? If those honorable gentlemen think they have got a majority, let them put the want-of-confidence motion first on the Paper, and then let the House take a division as to when it shall be called on, and let the majority decide when that fair trial shall be. What I understand by a fair trial is, that the person accused shall have an opportunity of answering the accusation. Those honorable gentlemen have got that opportunity, and I know of no other trial to which they are entitled in this House, and certainly no argument has been adduced by honorable gentlemen on that side which shows that they are entitled to more. When we remember that in 1877 the honorable member for Kaiapo, and others with him, argued strongly against the action which the Government then took with regard to their position in this House, it must astonish any one to find that honorable gentleman swallowing all the principles he then held, on account of the difference of circumstances. Surely, if there has been anything shady on our side of the House, those high-minded gentlemen opposite are not going to accept that as the only principle they will adopt! Surely they will not accept precedents from us! The honorable gentleman says he defies any one to point out any case in which the House of Commons has barred supplies; and I defy the honorable gentleman to point out any case in the House of Commons where the Treasurer has come down and stated to the House that he intends to move for supply on condition that no person shall move an amendment. If he can point to a single case where a Treasurer, knowing that the condition of the State required it, and intending to move for supplies, first asked that it should be passed without debate and without amendment, then it will be time enough for us to say whether his question can be answered. However, I can point to a case which the honorable member surely forgets. Surely he must forget the conditions attached to the granting of supplies last session.

Major ATKINSON.—They were all granted. There were no conditions.

Mr. HISLOP.—If they were granted without conditions, the reason was, that they were so absurd that the present Treasurer, who was then one of the leaders of the Opposition, saw it was no use enforcing them, and so abandoned them; but he knows he intended that supplies should only be granted on those conditions, and I believe there was one condition afterwards attached. I must say I think the bandying about between honorable members on one side and on the other

of accusations as to who are to be blamed on account of what has taken place, ought to be put a stop to. If honorable gentlemen really and conscientiously stick to their principles, let them state their reasons to the House, and let the country afterwards judge of those reasons, for the judgment of individuals upon themselves is not worth much. I believe the party ties round the Government are now so strong that it is impossible for them to regard even those principles which ought to guide members on all sides; and certainly, in a matter where their own individual action is concerned, I should not trust their judgment far. Nor do I think the country will change its opinion of that action on account of all the self-laudation they may give utterance to. I hope it will be thoroughly understood that the action which this side of the House has taken is perfectly constitutional. Let the honorable gentleman move his Bill, and then if he finds there is factious opposition it will be time for him to say we have barred supply. If the amendment of the honorable member for Port Chalmers should turn out to be one that will have the practical effect of barring supply, I, for one, will not be a party to it, nor do I think that any other honorable member on this side of the House will be a party to it; but if it is a simple statement of grievance, and if he binds himself, and, as far as he can, others on this side, not to debate it, but simply to propose it and divide, if necessary, upon it, he will be only doing that which he has a perfect right to do, and which if he does not do he will be showing that he is not fit to hold a leading place in a deliberative Assembly. I hope the House will uphold the right we undoubtedly possess, that a majority shall rule, and also that we shall have an opportunity of referring to the Crown any grievance we may have.

MR. STEWART.—The Government seem to be conscious that they are in a minority, and they are evading the real question. The Parliament of this country is responsible for the proper government of it, and that Parliament has the choice of its own Ministry, and, if that Ministry does not command the confidence of Parliament, I submit that it ought to adopt the usual course, and retire from office. The power of Parliament is two-fold—it is punitive and preventive. If a Government do not resign, Parliament is entitled to oust them from office; and if a Ministry is attempted to be thrust upon the House which has not its confidence, it has a right to say, "No; we shall not allow you to control the affairs of this Parliament." The honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Acton Adams) the other day referred to a passage in Todd's "Parliamentary Practice," Vol. I., page 212, which tended to show that the Ministry of the day were entitled to a fair trial. The honorable member, however, omitted an important qualification to the proposition which Todd lays down. These words are, "In all ordinary circumstances, the Ministers chosen by the Sovereign are entitled to, &c." The words "in all ordinary circumstances" are omitted from the passage quoted [*ante*, page 196] by the honorable member, and have a most potent

effect in qualifying the proposition laid down by Todd. One of the modern constitutional writers—Freeman—refers to the practice laid down by May, and to the case of Pitt, upon which Todd relies in discussing the question. Constitutional law is unwritten law, which has grown up year by year and century by century. This unwritten law has been greatly modified; and Freeman points out that the power which the King seventy or eighty years ago undoubtedly exercised would not be sanctioned, and would not be attempted to be exercised, in modern times. Freeman, who is a writer of unquestionable authority, in his work on the English Constitution, at page 201, in referring to the position taken by Pitt, states,—

“Such conduct would not be deemed constitutional now, but the wide difference between the constitution of the House of Commons then and now should be borne in mind.”

The honorable member for Kaiapoi (Mr. Bowen) says, “Hear, hear.” I do not think that is quite consistent with what he said before. I understood him to say the other day that this Ministry were entitled to a fair trial, and that they were entitled to remain in office until they had explained their policy to the country, and had had an opportunity of submitting their measures to the House. But what did my honorable friend say when he was in opposition two years ago? It will be remembered, of course, that the circumstances then were almost parallel in every respect to the present, only my honorable friend happened to be on the Opposition side then, instead of on the Government side. This is what he then said:—

“We conceive that the honorable member for the Thames has seized the reins of power in an unconstitutional manner, and does not command a majority. That being the case, are we not right in at once challenging his position? Is not that a fairer and a more straightforward course than asking the honorable gentleman to carry on the business, keeping at the same time the intention to challenge his position hanging over his head? If they possess a majority, what do they fear? If they do not possess a majority, of what have they to complain?”

When I read this speech in *Hansard*, and remembered the speech the honorable member for Kaiapoi delivered the other day. I was quite amazed, because the speech he lately made is the exact antithesis of the one we find in *Hansard*. This House will be lowering its dignity if it allows a minority to control its affairs, and to back out, whenever the slightest appearance of a division presents itself, by proposing an adjournment of the debate, or some other motion which shuffles the business away from the consideration of the House. That is not the kind of Ministry which should command the confidence of this House. Another modern writer, and one who is a very distinguished Tory, places the position of the Ministry in a very clear light, and also discusses this question with reference to the case of Pitt. He says, at page 148, in considering the power of Parliament,—

“If it perceive the King in danger of being misled by weak or by wicked counsellors, it is

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bound to interpose its advice without waiting for the actual occurrence of the mischief it has, or thinks that it has, cause to anticipate.”

That is to say, if a Ministry are thrown upon the House in whom it has no confidence, it is entitled at the outset to say, “We shall not intrust that Ministry with the administration of the affairs of the country.” The House is entitled to say it has no confidence in them, without assigning any reason whatever. It is not necessary to show that the Ministry have mismanaged the affairs of the country, because that would not remedy the mismanagement. The House has a right to anticipate the evil. I submit that nothing could be more clear than the law as laid down by Hearn, whom I have just quoted, and who is well known to be an extreme Tory. I will now quote from another very able writer—Hallam, whom Macaulay described as one of the few historians who are not advocates. Hallam occupies the distinguished position of being an impartial judge of history. Hallam, in his work on Europe during the Middle Ages, Vol. III., page 71, states,—

“He has learned in a very different school from myself who denies to Parliament at the present day a preventive as well as vindictive control over the administration of affairs: a right of resisting by those means which lie within its sphere the appointment of unfit Ministers.”

There is the sum and substance of the whole law laid down, that this Parliament has an unquestionable right to stop at once the exercise of authority on the part of Ministers who do not possess its confidence. The reason for this is obvious. There is a well-known maxim that “the King can do no wrong,” and that maxim arises simply from this: that the King undertakes no responsibility; that the country is governed by Responsible Advisers; and any wrong done is not attributed to the King, but to the Advisers of the Crown. Therefore the theory that the King can do no wrong rests entirely upon that well-known maxim, that the country is governed by responsible Ministers. Responsible government, as is well known, has been introduced into most of the colonies, and has been in force since 1847 in Canada. Now, it is monstrous to say that this House shall be responsible to the country for the administration of affairs, and yet shall have no voice, no controlling influence, over the gentlemen who carry on the business of the country. A great deal has been stated from time to time as to what the Ministry intend to do. They seem very unsettled as to their course of procedure; they are shifting their position from day to day, and we know not what the result of this constant changing may be. This much I do say: that, if the Government and their supporters are to claim to be called the Constitutional party, they must act in a constitutional manner; that, when a motion of want of confidence is brought down, they should take immediate steps for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not they have the confidence of this House. If they find that they have not the confidence of this House, then let them adopt the proper course, and retire. In the

first place the Government have got into their present position in an unconstitutional manner, and, being there in an unconstitutional manner, they want to remain there in an unconstitutional manner. The beginning, the middle, and the end of their career will be unconstitutional. I say that the members on this side of the House will not allow the constitutional right we possess to be trampled upon by any threat which may be made with the view of influencing the decision of this House. With regard to the question of granting supplies I need not reiterate what has been already stated. So far as I am personally concerned, I should be extremely glad if supplies were granted. But are we to grant supplies with some such threat as this hanging over our heads: "You must not interfere in the slightest way with our course of action; you must not exercise your undoubted right of simply stating what grievance you have: we will permit the country to drift into confusion and bankruptcy rather than allow our particular whim to be over-ruled"? If Ministers have the slightest regard for the representatives of the country, if they wish to consider the prosperity of the country, if they desire to forward the passing of those liberal measures to which they now lay claim, I submit that the Ministry would be consulting their own dignity, and consulting the undoubted constitutional right of this House, by at once stepping forward and challenging a fair fight; and let the result of that fight decide what is to be done. With these remarks I have to express my regret that the Ministry have adopted a course which is really obstructive—a course not only obstructive, but absolutely lowering to the dignity of a representative Assembly—a course which I hope will not be followed by any Ministry, no matter under what circumstances they may obtain a seat on the Ministerial benches.

Mr. DICK.—I was astonished to hear the remarks which fell from my colleague for Dunedin City. Since he has gone over to that side of the House he is most eloquent and earnest in advocating a cause which he should be the last on the present occasion to speak upon. He has spoken about the Ministry occupying their seats in an unconstitutional manner. I do not understand wherein the want of constitutional arrangement exists. That honorable gentleman voted with us on that occasion, and thereby gave us a majority, which gave those honorable members their seats in a most constitutional and regular way. The honorable member by his vote assisted to give the present Ministry the majority which, so far as we know, they have at present. The honorable member spoke of the Ministry acting in a way dishonoring to the House—of their acting in an unconstitutional way in not surrendering their seats when they were not in a majority. I say that the Ministry, so far as we know at the present moment, are in a majority. It is possible the honorable member may like to come back to us, and give us his vote when the division takes place. If it was right for the honorable member to cross so very rapidly to the other side of the House, other members on that side may think it right to come over to this side. Who can say

on which side of the House there is a majority at the present moment? I have nothing to say about the honorable member airing his eloquence on the subject of precedents. This seems to be a field-time for our young lawyers to come forward and look up all precedents that have occurred in British history for a great number of years. Of course they can find precedents on both sides, and speak strongly on both sides. But what we want to do in the meantime is to get forward with the business of the country. We should not refuse the Government the opportunity of bringing down what they wish to place before us, and letting us know what their object is. The honorable gentleman who has just spoken, having assisted in putting the Ministry on those seats, was bound in honor to see what they had to propose before he declared that he had no confidence in them. If the honorable member had himself been sent for he would have had a right to say what Ministry should be formed; but, not having been sent for, he should have stood by the Premier until he had brought forward his policy, and judged whether, according to his opinion, the views put forward were correct or not. He should not have left this side and gone over to the other simply because there might be one or two members of the Ministry who did not exactly suit him. Now, the honorable member for Wai-taki (Mr. Hislop) asked if any one would say that the majority was in favour of the present Premier forming a Government. He dared us to say so. I venture to say that the majority was in favour of the present Premier forming a Government. There was a majority of two for the resolution brought forward by the present Premier. Did honorable members think that some other gentleman was to be sent for than the gentleman who carried the resolution by a majority of two? I say it was the most reasonable thing to expect that the honorable gentleman who brought forward that resolution which had the effect of removing the late Government should be the gentleman to form the new Government. It seems to me most unreasonable that this obstruction should exist so strongly. I am not a party man. I do not care much who are in the Ministry so long as we get the work of the country carried on, and the liberal measures carried forward. If it should happen that a new Ministry came into office, I would not obstruct every measure which they chose to bring forward. I say that it is not becoming, dignified, or honorable on the part of their opponents not to give the Government a fair chance of letting us know what they intend to do in connection with the affairs of the country. For the Opposition to bring forward a motion of want of confidence because they think one or two members have changed their minds, without first giving the Government a chance of telling us what they intend to do, is, to say the least of it, ungenerous. No doubt the honorable member for Port Chalmers feels that he has got good grounds for doing so. I presume he thinks he will secure a majority, or else he would not have brought forward the motion. But I believe no one can be certain as to whether the majority will be given to one side or the other. It is not

fair to this House to think that every member has made up his mind at once upon the subject—that each member has decided which way he shall go—until the whole matter has been duly discussed and considered upon its merits. We are not here simply to take the side of one party or another party. We are here—some of us, I trust, at any rate—to see that the interests of the country at large are attended to, and that justice is done to those who have sent us here to represent their interests. It seems to me harsh to refuse the Government the sum of money they require—I shall not say refuse; but the honorable member for Port Chalmers told us that, unless the Government agreed to allow him to bring on the motion of want of confidence to-morrow, he would not allow the measure to come forward.

Mr. MACANDREW.—No.

Mr. DICK.—Well, he said he would bring forward a motion of a kind which would be injurious to the Government—a motion to the same effect as a vote of want of confidence in the Government.

Mr. MACANDREW.—The honorable gentleman has misapprehended me altogether. I said that if the Government would give an assurance that the no-confidence motion would come on to-morrow we would go into Committee of Supply at once, without complaining about anything, but if they declined to do so we should, before going into Supply, air our grievances. We did not say we would refuse supplies. The honorable gentleman has misapprehended me altogether.

Mr. DICK.—It comes very much to the same thing. The great grievance, as I understand it, is embodied in the want-of-confidence motion. I say it seems very harsh—I do not know what the sum is; I should fancy that the Government, under the present circumstances, would not ask for a large sum—it seems to me very harsh that we are to put off paying the salaries of those employed by the Government throughout the country until the no-confidence motion has been fully deliberated upon. Are those persons who are living from hand to mouth, paying their way every month, to be kept out of their salaries whilst we here are discussing the question of whether there is confidence in one Government or confidence in another Government? I say it is unfair to the Government servants that such a course should be adopted. I think it would be well if some compromise were come to whereby the public servants would not be injured while we are having our party fight as to who shall occupy the Government benches.

Mr. PYKE.—It was not my intention to have addressed the House just now; but so much has been said about the want-of-confidence motion that I am compelled to explain my position in this House, and the course I intend to take, before I give another vote within these walls. And I have been drawn to my feet now by the remarks of the honorable member for Dunedin City who has just sat down. He said the Government were placed in their seats by a majority of two, and wanted to know whether any one of the gentlemen who voted for turning out the late Ministry was not prepared to see an entirely new Ministry in office under the

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present Premier; or if any one voted with the idea that the old Ministry would be reconstructed. I answer positively, "Yes; I did for one;" and, in saying that, I wish to explain the vote I gave last session on Sir William Fox's amendment, the vote I gave this session on Mr. Hall's amendment, and also the vote I intend to give on this and any future occasion. Honorable members may laugh, but perhaps they will laugh on the other sides of their mouths before I have done. The vote I gave this session on Mr. Hall's amendment was the logical sequence of the vote I gave last session on Sir William Fox's amendment; and my object was the same in both cases. Members of the late Ministry, and likewise other members of this House, know perfectly well that I laboured hard during last session to endeavour to bring about—what? The dismissal or removal from office of that Ministry? No, Sir; the reconstruction of the Government. The late Ministers know, and honorable members know, that I laboured hard to bring about a reconstruction of the Government; and it was only when I found I could not do that by persuasion, as I wished to do, that I voted for Sir William Fox's amendment, in the hope that I should bring about the same result in another way. I took the same view this session, and, had my advice been taken and the Ministry been reconstructed—and I still say it would have been the best course—an amendment from the other side of the House expressing no-confidence would not have been carried. I held, rightly or wrongly it is not now necessary to discuss, that the Ministry as it then existed was defective, and could I have secured an alteration in its component parts certainly I should never have voted either with Sir William Fox last session, or with the honorable member for Selwyn this session. In doing so, I was doing the best work for the party with whom my interests have always been, with whom my sympathy rests now, and from whom it is not likely, at my time of life, that I shall ever separate myself. I have always contended for my party and for the principles of my party. I know the trap into which gentlemen opposite fell. They thought they were using me, while I knew, and know now, that I was using them. I desired to bring about a certain result. They helped me to do it, and I am very much obliged to them for their assistance. Having succeeded in bringing about that result, if they expect me to abide in their tents one day longer they make a great mistake. I will not do so. Now, I place a literal construction upon the English language; but it appears that the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government does not. What was the amendment carried by the honorable gentleman now at the head of the Government?—That this House has no confidence in the Government "as at present constituted." If it had not been for the insertion of those four final words the Opposition would not have had my vote, nor yet that of the honorable and learned member for Dunedin City; and the action which has since been taken has been quite at variance with our wishes. In the Ministry which has been formed by the honorable member for

Selwyn there are gentlemen—and I am not speaking of them personally, as they well know—in whom, as politicians, I have no confidence, individually or collectively. I will take the liberty of saying here that, however much I deprecated the continuance in office of the late Government, I am bound to say that I attribute credit, and the whole country and those who shall come after us will attribute great credit, to the honorable member for Christchurch City (Sir G. Grey) for having, in an unprecedentedly short space of time, effectually aroused the people to a sense of their rights and privileges never felt before. I may not consider him the best administrator, but that credit is due to him, and for all time it will assuredly attach to his name, as credit attaches to him for great services rendered in other capacities. There is another service rendered by him of equal value to the country: the demolition of that continuous Ministry—that family party—which misgoverned New Zealand so long and so unsuccessfully. Indeed, the principal reason I have for my opposition to the present Ministry is that I see amongst them too many of the fragmentary remains of the Ministry which was ejected from those benches two years ago. A consummation more “devoutly to be wished” it is impossible to conceive. I will not weary the House by going into the details of the past, but never was a public man so disgusted with political affairs as I was until they were removed from office. Now, the position we take up here has been wrongly stated. We are told we are going to stop supplies. The honorable member for Kaiapoi was very strong on that point to-night: but I hold that what has been done should have no more effect in stopping supplies than if not a word had been spoken at all. What is the position? It is this: “Will you name a day on which you will grant the Commons of this House the constitutional right to discuss the question whether the Government sitting on those benches are there by the will of the people or not? If you will do that, we will pass supplies. If you will not, we must take the opportunity of stating our grievances, on the question of supply being raised, as we have a perfectly legitimate and constitutional right to do.” If there be any failure of constitutional practice at all, it is on the part of the members of the Government, who stand up in this House and say, “No; you shall not give supplies; we will not ask for them; we will throw the affairs of the country into confusion, and throw upon you the odium of not paying the contractors and public servants, unless you consent to forego your constitutional right of stating your grievances.” I say, Sir, it is the Government who are obstructing the passage of supplies, and not the members on this side of the House. The present Government claim credit for liberal measures, for the Bills with which they have strewn the table of this House, promising all things. But what security have we that any one of these Bills will be allowed to pass into law? What are these questions? Jackdaws strut about in the feathers of peacocks, but they are only jackdaws still. We know them of old. We know they have no

liberalism in their hearts. We know perfectly well, and the people of the country know perfectly well, that, although these gentlemen pretend to bring forward liberal measures, once they are safely in their seats these Bills will be dropped, and we shall hear no more of them. They come here dressed up in second-hand clothing. They have stolen the family plate. Sir George Grey’s crest is upon every bit of it; and we will not trust them with the custody of the family plate. That is the position they are in. No one will be found to believe they are liberal in their hearts. We have had experience of them for years; but when did any one of them come down and propose Liberal measures before? Never within my recollection. I have heard a great deal about “Measures, not men.” That is the cry of the party opposite just now. But I have lived long enough to know you cannot get good measures from incompetent men. You cannot gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. I never agreed with the cry, “Measures, not men”—measures and men, I say; let us have them both; we shall never have the measures unless we have the men. I say that, inasmuch as the Government have obtained votes from members of this House under the pretence of reconstructing the Government, they have rushed those benches by false pretences. If they were sincere in their desire to meet the constitutional question raised—and this House has a perfect right to raise such a question—they would have fixed some day on which it should be placed at the top of the Order Paper.

An Hon. MEMBER.—So we did.

Mr. PYKE.—I have not heard it named. Let me contrast their conduct, for the sake of informing some members of the House, with the conduct of the Ministry which they have succeeded. They talk about a fair trial. I do not mean to say that two wrongs make a right, or two blacks make a white, but I say that for the Colonial Treasurer, above all men, to complain of sharp practice and the want of a fair trial, is one of the most audacious things ever any man did within the walls of this House. What happened when Sir George Grey took office in 1877? Why, that Ministry were hardly in their seats, they had not expounded one particle of their policy, they had not seen six sitting-days, when Major Atkinson moved a motion of want of confidence in the Ministry. But how did the Government meet the question? Did they use all the forms of the House so as to burke the question? No; they accepted the trial gallantly and honestly. Notice of motion was given upon the Wednesday, and they said, “We will not go on with any further business until this is settled;” and on the Friday they went straight into the fight. What is meant, then, when it is said that the Government are adopting the tactics of their predecessors? I will refer to what happened afterwards directly. Not content with defeat, when that question was fought out and settled in this House, they brought up a second motion of no-confidence in the same session.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The same day.

Mr. PYKE.—The same day? Well, the same

session, at any rate; and that, of course, was a most improper thing to do. Ministers said, "We will not have the thing debated twice in one session; the House cannot be kept in a state of uproar." And let me say—although I have not had a word on the subject with any other member of our party, I think I may say this: that, if we are defeated on this want-of-confidence motion, we will not attack them again during the session, but will give them every assistance in carrying out their measures; we will try to improve them; we will rub up their German plate into honest English silver. We have heard a great deal about precedent. Now, if there is one thing more foolish than another it is the endeavouring to force upon a colonial Assembly such as this the acts of men at our antipodes, in order that we may be bound by every foolish thing our fathers did. I say we are here to make precedents for ourselves. We are laying the foundations of a young empire. We are making history. We have a right to teach our children what the precedents and the conduct of our public business should be, and need not revert to the antique times of Pitt and Fox, when they scarcely understood what the privileges of Parliament were, and when the King insisted on keeping his Ministers in office against the will of the Parliament and the people. But there is one precedent which, if there be any validity in the vague threats improperly and unconstitutionally thrown out by Ministers, this House may have to repeat. When the power of the Crown was growing too great to be borne in England, the House of Commons passed this resolution, which was placed on the records of the House: "Resolved,—That it is necessary to declare that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." Now, Sir, I do not impute any false statements to the honorable gentlemen opposite, but I do not believe there is any truth in the insinuation thrown out that, even if the representatives of the people declare that the present Ministry do not possess the confidence of the House, they have no power to force them from those benches—that there is another power to retain them in office against the will of the representatives of the people. But, Sir, if there be any such attempt made, the children of the men who would not stoop to the Crown will certainly not stoop to the pale reflex of the Crown in this colony. I have only a few more words to say; but, before proceeding to the next subject, there is something here which I think it is well I should read to the House. The first is an extract from the speech of a man whose name should never be mentioned without respect and reverence: I refer to the illustrious Edmund Burke, once himself a Minister of the Crown, but who fought the battle of constitutional liberty when Pitt was wrongfully retained in office by the King. What does he say upon this subject?—

"Whenever we shall see it expedient to offer our advice concerning His Majesty's servants, who are also those of the public, we confidently hope that the personal favour of any Minister, or any set of Ministers, will not be more dear to His Majesty than the credit and character of the

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House of Commons. It is an experiment full of peril to put the representative wisdom and justice of His Majesty's people in the wrong: it is a crooked and desperate design, leading to mischief, the extent of which no human wisdom can foresee, to attempt to form a prerogative party in the nation, to be resorted to as occasion shall require, in derogation from the authority of the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled."

And if the honorable gentlemen opposite are not content to take Edmund Burke, I will give them a later authority. Earl Grey, in his *Essay on Parliamentary Government*, says,—

"The large power intrusted to the servants of the Crown is guarded from being abused, both by their being made to feel that they must use this power in such a manner as to be prepared to meet the criticisms of opponents continually on the watch for any errors they may commit, and also by their being only allowed to retain their authority so long as they possess the confidence of Parliament. The Ministers of the Crown are bound to retire when that confidence is withdrawn from them, and to make way for others to whom it may be granted, so that the affairs of the country may always be conducted by men who are able to act and speak with the authority which can only belong to the Executive while it is supported by the Legislature."

Now, Sir, it has been denied over and over again that there is a majority in this House opposed to the Government. Why do they not put it to the test once for all, if they think there is not a majority opposed to them, instead of wasting the time of the House by bringing about debates which would not take place if once we were assured that those gentlemen possess the confidence of the majority of this House? It is useless to say there is not a majority opposed to them so long as they refuse to have the question answered; and I do not hesitate to say that if they had any respect for themselves they would have had it answered long ago. Their retention of office under the present circumstances does not reflect any credit upon them nor upon the proceedings of this House. I think that during the past week—I may say the past eight or nine days—this House and the country at large have been treated to spectacles of the most extraordinary kind—spectacles unprecedented in the annals of parliamentary government—spectacles which I trust will never be repeated again. What have we seen? We have seen the Ministers of the day absolutely obstructing the business of this House; we have seen the Ministers of the day putting their supporters up to speak with much fire and fury, with "infinite wrath and infinite despair," to prevent the questions before the House being properly dealt or proceeded with. And we have seen that heaven-born financier, that great arithmetician, who, I am credibly informed, "lisped in numbers" even in his cradle—we have seen that gentleman, the Colonial Treasurer, standing up in his place, and, for party purposes, and party purposes alone, making statements eminently calculated to injure the finance of this country and to retard its prosperity. Well, Sir, these are

spectacles not at all desirable, and I trust that we shall see no more of them. The gauntlet has been thrown down. Have they the manliness to take it up? I pause for a reply.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. PYKE.—Take it up at once then, and go to the fight. We are prepared to do it to-night—any time they please. They dare not take it up. They have not ransacked the pigeon-holes enough. They have been searching the pigeon-holes for those great scandals we have heard them talk so much about, and they cannot find them. They come down day after day, and they do not tell the House a single thing that the House did not know before they opened their lips. I maintain that they persist in carrying on the government whilst they are in a minority—a thing which ought not to be permitted for one moment. Let us know who the rulers of the country are. Let us save the time of the House. A Government that is not able to carry a single measure has no right to retain its position on the Treasury benches for one hour. My own opinion—and I say it boldly—is this: that they know very well the fate before them; that they will never allow the question to come before this House; that they will not retire and go at once to His Excellency and say, “We cannot carry our measures in the House; we can do nothing without the sanction and support of the gentlemen opposed to us; and we place our resignations in your Excellency’s hands.” The whole affair is in a nutshell. The question before the House and the country is, “Shall you be governed by those who truly and properly represent you, or by a narrow-minded oligarchy?” If these gentlemen are honest—I mean politically honest; I should be sorry to doubt their honesty otherwise—I say they will retire. If they love their country, they will allow an opportunity to proceed with the business of the country. If office, place, and power be not their desire and design, they will take that course; but if they prefer to retain place and power, either for their own ends or in the hope of finding the means of maligning their opponents, then, of course, whatever resolution this House may pass on this or any other question, they will stick to their seats, “ignominious, but contented.”

Mr. SPEIGHT.—Sir, I am not going to discuss this question, by any means. I apprehend, as one honorable member for Dunedin City puts it, that this has been a grand day for young lawyers in the House; and I apprehend it has afforded them great pleasure to show their ability and talents in the legal line. But what I have been forcibly impressed with for the last few days has been that, whatever disadvantages the discussions may possess, they have had one advantage—that they have given to the young members, who sit for the first time in the House this session, a baptism of fire which may be of service to them, but which I hope they will never have again. It is said that the young man who goes into a fight for the first time is best off if he gets into the thick of the battle at once, because, if he escapes with his life, he will fight with better nerve afterwards. In like manner, I think the young

members of this House have now seen the worst features in connection with parliamentary practice. Therefore we shall get accustomed to them and drop into the good features by-and-by. I am not going to discuss the matter; but I want to ask a question or two of the honorable gentlemen who now hold possession of the Treasury benches. If I am in error in the statement I make, I shall be very glad to be corrected; but I think this is the best opportunity to get information on a subject which has been troubling my mind for the past half-hour or so. The statement is made broadcast that the honorable member for Port Chalmers is preventing the passing of supplies. I want to know how he has prevented the passing of supplies when the Ministry have not dared to propose their passage. If it is a fact that no other member of this House is permitted to move the suspension of Standing Orders for the purpose of passing supplies, how can supplies be passed if the Government do not themselves propose it? Therefore it is ungenerous, unjust, and misleading to say that the honorable member for Port Chalmers stands in the way. But the next and most important question I wish to ask is this: If they came down to-night with the intention of asking for supplies, did they not come with a message from the Governor to that end? By what right do they intercept that message? I do not know whether they possess that message or not; but, if it be the constitutional practice for these gentlemen, who profess to be so very constitutional, to intercept a message of that kind from the Governor, the sooner we understand it the better. Is it to be understood that a message can be sent from the Governor asking for supplies, and that Ministers, for party purposes, can pocket that message and never present it to the House? That is a matter which I want to be cleared up to begin with.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They are only the messengers of the Governor.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—They are only the messengers of the Governor, the honorable member tells me. If an ordinary messenger intercepted any communication he was intrusted to deliver, he would be apprehended for a breach of trust, and, after a proper trial, he would be dismissed—a course which I think will be pursued with this Ministry. If it be that the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches think that they can delude the country in this matter, they are reckoning upon an amount of stupidity on the part of the country on which they have no right to reckon. The country must understand that, if supplies were wanted, they would be granted; and they will also understand that, if there is an honest, distinct grievance, the proper time to bring that grievance forward is when the House is moved into Committee of Supply. And what greater grievance can there be than the grievance of a faction—not of a majority—standing in the way of transacting the business of the country? No greater grievance can be brought forward. I take it that, even supposing that the honorable member for Port Chalmers did move an amendment on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, it is not a

matter which requires many hours' discussion. Sir, I think, notwithstanding what the honorable member (Mr. Dick) says, that there are very few members who have not made up their minds already, and who are not perfectly prepared to go to the vote at any moment. That is, as far as their judgment of the merits of the case is concerned. But some honorable gentlemen are not prepared to go to the vote, because they think that, by the delay of a few days, pressure can be brought to bear upon some members—pressure of an intellectual character—that they can be convinced by means of some kind, and that, if they can be convinced, the majority which undoubtedly exists on the Opposition side of the House can be turned into a minority. That is the only object of delay. Now, we understand quite as well as the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches that that is the whole object they have in view in delaying the business of the country. I wish, Sir, to ask the question, whether or not any Minister has a right to intercept a message from the Crown to this House after it has been once committed to him to give to this House.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I had hoped to escape making a speech at all upon the subjects that have occupied the attention of the House for so many nights past; but, Sir, after what we have heard to-night about these great liberal measures, and what we have heard from each side of the House as to the wish they have not to be credited with the odium of stopping supplies, and to be credited with the glory of passing liberal measures, I desire to say that, for my part, I feel not the slightest anxiety on the subject. I do not care who has, or who has not, the odium of stopping supplies. I feel that, after what I know, and after what I feel sure I soon shall know, my duty in the matter is perfectly clear, and it is not for me to ask upon whom the odium will fall so long as I follow the dictates of my own conscience. I shall, before I sit down, give good reasons why I think it very desirable that we should, let the consequence be what it may, continue those gentlemen on the Government benches till they have had at least an opportunity to give us the Statement with regard to Native affairs which they promised they would give to-morrow night. With regard to the passing of liberal measures, I must say that, after having been considered not only a Liberal, but a Radical, for the last forty years, it is almost refreshing to me to think that any one could consider that I am not a Radical—that I am for the future to be something more respectable—to be considered a Conservative, or something of that sort. Throughout the whole of my life my feelings have always been on the side of the greatest good for the greatest number; and I am utterly indifferent as to how I may be classed, or what name may be given to me, so long as I have an opportunity of doing what I consider my duty in carrying out the measures that I think most beneficial to the greater portion of the country in which I live. I do not think that either side of this House has any reason to be particularly anxious with regard to the credit of passing liberal measures. It

Mr. Speight

should be in the memory of all the members of the late Parliament that we carried the most important liberal measure—a Bill for the extension of the franchise—by a majority of 61 to 2. There are only two members in this House at the present time who have any particular reason for wishing to have their characters cleared up on that subject. One is the honorable member for Timaru, who voted against that measure, and the other is the honorable member for the Thames and Christchurch City, who destroyed the measure after it was passed. It is perhaps desirable that they should have an opportunity of signaling themselves in some way by the arduous support of measures which they have done so much to oppose in times past. But, with regard to all the rest of the members of the old House, I think we can afford to rest upon our laurels. We can afford to take the credit for what we have done. We have shown, not by speeches and promises to the country, but by actual votes in this House, that we were anxious that every man who had resided in the country for twelve months should have an opportunity of exercising a full voice in sending representatives to this House. Having done that, I think it idle for us now to feel any great anxiety as to what the Greyites or their organs may call us, as they are themselves a peculiar composite of Conservatives and Communists. So far as I am concerned, they are quite at liberty to call me either one or the other. It will not alter my course in the slightest degree; and I do not care a straw what name they may choose to give me. With reference to the honorable member for Dunstan, who has spoken to-night with so much zeal about liberal measures, perhaps I should have included him in the category of those who wish or who need some credit for their support of liberal measures at the present time; because those who were in this House twelve months ago will remember that there was no member who spoke with so much zeal and vehemence against the passing of the Triennial Parliaments Bill as the honorable member for Dunstan. Those who were in this House at that time will remember that he not only spoke against it in the most violent way, but urged the gentleman of whom he has spoken so highly to-night—Sir George Grey—to consider that by passing that Bill he was doing the worst thing he could possibly do for the advancement of liberal measures in the colony; that it was a most illiberal measure, and would put the representation of the colony entirely in the hands of the wealthy. In addition to that, the honorable gentleman also spoke very earnestly and voted against the redistribution of seats. Now, when a gentleman opposed strongly and vehemently two out of the three liberal measures that are now flaunted before the country, I do not think he is in a position to stand up and call other members of this House, who have acted in an entirely different way, the Conservative side of the House, and to say that his natural instincts are all on the Liberal side of the House. Perhaps what I am going to say is what few members would dare to utter just now; but I must say that, since we have heard the Financial Statement

that was delivered in this House two nights ago, it does seem to me little short of blasphemy to stand up here and waste our time in prating about liberal measures, when we know that the country is on the very verge of ruin; that it is necessary that something should be done instantly; that the whole course of our proceeding must be at once altered; and that the whole management of the country must be instantly placed in the hands of more capable and more prudent men than those who have brought it to its present condition, or else the country is ruined. As it is, I do not exaggerate when I say that the conduct of affairs during the last two years has depreciated the value of the whole of the property in this country by at least a half.—(No.)—I say that the value of landed property in New Zealand at the present moment is not more than one-half of what it was when the late Government assumed office. I do not say that the whole of this great depreciation is attributable to their conduct, but I say that a great deal of it is, and that I cannot imagine any conduct more directly calculated to ruin the credit of this colony and to bring about a state of disastrous failure than the conduct of the honorable members who have lately occupied those benches. Most of the speeches which the late Premier delivered when he was in Christchurch have been repeated in this House; but there are one or two parts that have not been repeated, and perhaps I had better supply the omission. The honorable gentleman told us, in explanation of having once spoken of Canterbury as an ugly duck, that he did not say an ugly duck, but an ugly duckling; and he then went on to explain that he alluded to the story about a brood of ducks which had been hatched, and amongst them was one particularly ugly, which was called by the rest "the ugly duckling." But it happened to be a swan, and as it grew up it became—and he delighted his audience by referring to Canterbury—the largest, the most beautiful, and the most magnificent of the whole. Now, Sir, when I hear the honorable member trying to call off our attention from the ruin he has brought on this colony by talking now of liberal measures, it reminds me, not of the ugly duck, but of the lame duck. Those of us who are acquainted with natural history know that when we disturb an old duck with her young ones she immediately pretends to be lame, and flutters just before our feet in the hope that we shall run after her and miss the valuable young birds which might make a good meal; for the old bird is worth nothing if we catch her—she is nothing but bone in that season, while the young ones are very nice, and easily caught. Now, I say that the late Premier has, with admirable tact, put his lame duck—these three liberal measures he talked so much about—before the country to divert their attention, whilst he has himself been ruining the country with his utter extravagance and ignorance in the matter of finance. Liberal measures are all very well in their place; but liberal measures will not restore this country to that state of prosperity which it was in when the late Premier took office. Liberal measures may do something; they may do a little for us, but they will not do a very great deal;

they will do comparatively little in the way of promoting our material prosperity. But I do say that a little prudent finance, a little wise economy, would have kept this country in a very different position from that in which it is now placed. The honorable gentleman has been deluding the people by shaking these liberal measures before them, and, at the same time, leading them rapidly to ruin, and indulging himself and his colleagues in extravagance such as was never known before in this country. Pretending to control finance, about which he was equally ignorant and indifferent, he has been going about the country playing the great man in the "Hinemoa" at an expense of £10,000 a year. Whilst the Native Minister has been spending £12,000 in making himself agreeable among the Maoris, without the control of this House, and in a manner that we know nothing about, the late Minister for Public Works has, as we were told the other night by the Colonial Treasurer, been constantly expending money upon public works without any reference to whether there was any money to expend or not—he has been simply spending whatever he thought proper, without any consultation with the Treasurer, and when the Treasurer did not even know what amounts he would be called upon to pay next month. Whilst all that has been going on, Sir, and whilst the other three members have sat on those benches as mere passive agents in the ruin of the colony, only too delighted to sit there at all under any circumstances, knowing that Nature had so entirely disqualified them for the position—whilst this has been going on, the country has been approaching a state of ruin, not only because the members of the Government were extravagant in themselves, but because also they were perfectly ignorant of the finances of the country. They knew nothing about where we were going to; and now, as soon as we get gentlemen on those benches who can tell us our position, we find that we are on the verge of ruin and bankruptcy. I say the solvency or insolvency of this country at the present moment depends entirely upon the one question of whether or not the five-million loan, so large a part of which has already been spent, has or has not been raised in England. I do not want to occupy the time of the House long—I have already spoken much longer than I intended; but there is another thing that has cropped up this afternoon which makes me feel that, let the consequences be whatever they may, let supplies be stopped or not, it is time that we knew something more than we do as to the proceedings of the late Government. When I heard this afternoon that a man named Joshua Jones received £390 for services which we know nothing about, but which are of a particularly suspicious character; when I recollect the fact that the same Joshua Jones was the man whose name was reluctantly dragged out of the late honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Barton) last session as the informant who furnished him with the gross calumnies he uttered in this House about the Taranaki District Judge and Magistrates; when I see that he is receiving secret money for services we know nothing about; when

we have brought out the fact that the late Government has assisted him to obtain a lease of 30,000 acres of Native land, and that the land is being surveyed for him at the public expense, it is time that we should insist upon knowing at any cost in what character and under what pretence these things have been done. From the many symptoms we have seen, we know that in various parts of the country public money has been lavishly spent on false pretences on the worst of men, and for the worst of purposes, not only in waste and extravagance, not only in indulgence and wickedness such as was never known in this country before, but it has been spent in corruption—in assisting to secure the return of members to this House pledged to support the most corrupt Government that was ever seen in an English colony. Sir, the present Government need care little about what such men can say about their clinging to office for a day or two after enough votes have been obtained to remove them; and I trust that they will stay there long enough to enlighten us a little further as to the expenditure of the Native Minister and the employment of Joshua Joneses in other parts of this colony.

Mr. MOSS.—Any one who listened carefully to the honorable gentleman who has just sat down must feel that he has built up charges of a most serious character upon the very smallest foundation. I much regretted to hear what the honorable gentleman said, and I challenge him to produce the slightest ground for the aspersions he has thrown upon the late Government. What has he told us beyond the single fact that Joshua Jones received £390 from the Government? Can he say that it was unfairly paid or received? And he even accompanied that with a statement which is not in accordance with fact, for he spoke of Mr. Jones as the person who last year furnished the honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Barton) with information, and whose name was reluctantly dragged from that honorable gentlemen. I deny that. I was present, and I say that the name was given spontaneously. It was given the moment it was asked for.

Mr. BOWEN.—I asked him for it two or three times before he gave it.

Mr. MOSS.—I sat beside the honorable member for Wellington City, and I assert that it is a perversion of words to say the name was dragged from him. He gave it voluntarily, and without hesitation. He trusted the person who gave the information. I am not prepared to say whether he trusted him rightly or wrongly, but it is unfair to speak of the matter in the way in which the honorable gentleman spoke of it. And then he is never tired of speaking of the services he has rendered to the cause of democracy, and he has the hardihood to stand up and call himself the only real and true Liberal in the House; yet he tells us that these great liberal measures—and he never speaks of them without a sneer—that these great liberal measures are nothing in comparison with the financial condition of the country at the present moment. There the honorable gentleman "let the cat out of the bag." I believe that if the present Government remain in office,

aided and assisted by the honorable gentleman, we shall hear before long that these measures are of no consequence, that the House must devote its attention to the financial position, and that these measures must go. It is such statements as these that shake my faith in their sincerity, and caused me to mistrust them from the first. One or two other remarks fell from the honorable gentleman which ought not to pass without comment. One of them was, that the late Government is answerable for the dreadful condition of the finances of the colony. Now, in the first place, I absolutely deny that the financial condition of the colony is what it was made out to be in the prospective Statement of the Colonial Treasurer. He tells us of the large deficiency we shall have, provided he is allowed to under-estimate the revenue as he likes, and provided, also, that no steps are taken to meet a deficiency. Is it possible that any Government could sit on those benches and not see that there was a deficiency to be faced, and not prepare in all legitimate ways to face it? I maintain that the present difficulty is largely due to the present Colonial Treasurer, who prevented the Government getting a four-million loan in 1877, and only allowed them two millions and a half. Then, again, what has the late Government done to cause this dreadful financial distress? What has it done to cause this extraordinary depression throughout the colony? Is it the land-tax that has done it? I believe the honorable gentleman voted for that. What else have the late Ministry done? Is it the system of public works? Who initiated that system, which everybody knew must end in difficulty in the long-run? The honorable gentlemen now in office had a larger hand in that than anybody else, and if anybody is responsible for it they are. Year by year the public Press denounced the manner in which the borrowed money was being spent. The very furniture in this Chamber was paid for out of borrowed money, our public buildings were erected out of it, and it was always declared that if the money was spent for such purposes a crash must come; and, because the late Government were in office when the crash did come, the honorable gentleman tells us that they alone are responsible for it. I feel that it is impossible to do justice to the largeness of the question before us, and, if the honorable gentlemen on the other side will not agree to the motion for adjournment, we must carry on the debate as a want-of-confidence debate, so that when we come to the want-of-confidence motion we can go to the vote without delay. I therefore hope the House will excuse me if I detain it a little longer. Sir, some very curious things have been said in the course of this debate. I heard it stated that one of the reasons why the present Government were so anxious to bring forward a liberal policy was this: that they wanted to deprive Sir George Grey of one pretext for gaining popularity. That statement was made by the Minister of Lands. Delilah was to shear Samson of his locks: but they will find that the Samson they sought to shear is as strong as ever, and that his name will be as respected and

as popular throughout the country in the future as it has been in the past. They will find that the man who introduced these measures, who called public attention to them, who pointed out their advantage, has not lost his influence in the country, and that he stands at this moment head and shoulders above the whole of the members of the Government. Why, Sir, on all sides honorable members tell us how vainly they tried to bring forward liberal measures in the past. The honorable member for Cheviot tells us he has tried it. I heard another member who is not now among us say that for twenty-three years he had been endeavouring to bring forward liberal measures. But all these efforts were vain. None of these gentlemen possessed the power or the ability to do it. They had not sufficient influence to draw public attention to the subject. But at last a man came forward who raised a cry throughout New Zealand that he would have these measures passed, and it is astonishing how men who were always opposed to their passing turn round and say that they are Liberals, and that they will pass these measures now. It is not because they admire them, not because they believe in them, but simply because it will deprive the previous Government of the credit of having passed them. Then we were also told that the late Ministry has made popular government hateful to the country. I fail to see it. I say, with regret, that the present Government are making parliamentary government hateful throughout the country. They are lowering the Parliament in the eyes of the country. They are a helpless minority factiously opposing the progress of business in this House, without any great cause to plead in extenuation of their action. They cannot say that former Governments have done as they are doing, for they have always been able to plead that they had a great cause to fight for. What great cause have the present Government? By their own admission last night, they merely wanted to deprive the leader of the late Government of the credit of passing these measures, to deprive him of the popularity which they had themselves so often sought and failed to obtain. That is the case. Can they tell of any other, as they sit there so charmingly helpless? Can they give us any other reason for their obstruction? The honorable gentleman tells us that it is ill work to prate of liberal measures while the finances of the country are in such a condition that they demand our undivided and serious attention. Is not that a reason why those honorable gentlemen, if they really have the welfare of the country at heart, should test their strength in this House at the earliest possible moment? It is delaying the consideration of those financial measures to decline to go into Committee of Supply to-night. If they have the welfare of the country at heart—if they for one moment wish to maintain for Parliament the respect of the people of the country—then, I say, the sooner they test the question of their strength the better, for the sooner will they know whether they can carry out the measures which the country demands. I should not like to give asperity to this debate, and wish to put up with all these

vexatious delays and annoyances with the best temper; but I put it to honorable gentlemen on those benches whether they can even sleep at night comfortably in the position they now occupy. The one solitary ground on which they stood at first was this, that we are bound to give to a new Ministry a fair hearing. Sir, they know well that that ground is solely based upon the English practice of old days, when the Sovereign personally appointed Ministers, and therefore it was a mark of respect to the Sovereign that they should have a hearing. They know, too, that they got into office in a most irregular way—that they would never have got there if they had brought forward a simple vote of want of confidence. They got there by a side-wind, and are sitting there by tricks which will make their supporters ashamed of the course which they have been forced to take, and which is bringing this Parliament very low in the eyes of the country. I would therefore appeal to them to rise above those tricks of which they were so fond of accusing the opposite party as being guilty. They call themselves the Constitutional party, they postured as the very Bayards of debate, and yet they are now violating the fundamental principle of constitutional government—that the majority shall rule. I urge upon them, before it is too late, to reconsider their position, and to face like men the difficulty which they have brought about for us, for themselves, and for the country.

Mr. SEDDON.—I will ask the indulgence of the House for ten minutes, while I endeavour to place it in its proper position. Before commencing my own remarks, I should like to use a quotation from an old Scotch poet, which well applies under present circumstances:—

O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us.

I feel quite satisfied that it will do honorable members on both sides of the House a great deal of good if they will bear that quotation in mind. And now, what position are we placed in to-night? The whole contention is simply this: Shall the vote of want of confidence be taken on Friday or on Tuesday? The leader of the Opposition, at the beginning of last week, wished the Government to fix a day on which this want-of-confidence motion should be taken. The Premier replied that, as soon as the Government found it convenient for the vote to be brought forward, they would fix a day. Time progressed, and we found ourselves in this position last week: The Premier—who was then still leader of the Opposition—said, "On Wednesday I shall be ready to give a brief *résumé* of the programme of my Government, and on Thursday I shall be able to give the House the details and particulars." Then the late Premier, Sir George Grey, stood up and said, "I do not wish to sit upon these benches a moment longer than I can help: will you relieve me at once?" The leader of the Opposition said, "I cannot do it; I want time; I will give good reasons to the House why the Ministry are not sworn in." And then the House adjourned. Wednesday came, and then those gentlemen, being on the Government benches, asked the House to adjourn again until the following

Tuesday. Opposition said, "No; you have had sufficient time, and have been long enough in Wellington to make yourselves fully acquainted with the requirements of the country. We therefore consider that you are only entitled to an adjournment till Friday, to mature your measures so far as to be able to lay them before the House." The Premier wanted an adjournment till Tuesday. "No," the Opposition said, "you shall not have it." I will put the Premier in the position of a schoolboy before his schoolmaster. The schoolmaster says, "John, you go home, and come back here on Friday, and then I will see how you have progressed with your lessons." On Friday the Premier came back, and held his book up to the schoolmaster, and proceeded to read the task he had been learning. But he had no sooner done reading than the schoolmaster said, "John, you have been cribbing; you must go home again: I do not want you here till Tuesday." Accordingly he was sent back home as a bad boy. Then, on Tuesday the same thing occurred. But there is this besides: There is another honorable gentleman, the Colonial Treasurer, a fellow-scholar with the Premier, who was promised—by both sides of the House—that he would be allowed to give the House a *résumé* of what he intends to do with reference to the question of finance. He makes his Statement; and what can the House and the country think of the honorable gentleman and his Statement, except that he has done all that he can to injure the credit of the colony? That brings us to Wednesday; and then we have the same thing again—the honorable gentlemen who claim to be the Government have refused point-blank every day this week to have this question of no-confidence tried. Under these circumstances, I say those honorable gentlemen have, in my opinion, and, I believe, in the opinion of a majority of the members of this House, and in the opinion of every colonist who has an interest in political affairs, brought the government of the colony into disgrace. They were termed by the honorable member for Parnell the "detective Ministry;" but, instead of that, I think they have gone a step farther, and should now be called the "Tite Barnacle" Ministry, because they stick as tightly to those benches as barnacles do to the bottom of a ship. I would ask, in what different position are we now from that in which we were a week ago? Here is Thursday evening, and we have been doing nothing all the week. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government is simply told, "If you will only allow the want-of-confidence motion to come on on Friday, we will grant you supplies." I am sure, if he understood the true position in which he stands, he would have consented to that proposition, instead of putting the matter off week by week. His answer is, "No, I will not; it may come on on Tuesday." If he had allowed it to be taken on Friday, the Opposition would have consented to hear the Native Minister make his Statement. They would, I think, have acted wisely in doing so, because it has been stated, inside this House and outside of it, and has been commented on in the Press, that there is something to be disclosed

in that Statement which will materially affect the position of those honorable gentlemen who recently sat on the Government benches. But now I begin to think that we shall have no glaring disclosures whatever made, and that there will be nothing in that Statement which will induce honorable members on this side of the House to lose confidence in the leaders of their party. I will give a good reason for thinking so. When I found an attempt made this afternoon—a cowardly attempt, under the circumstances—to unseat one of the Maori members, I was led to believe that what they expected from the Statement of the Native Minister was not likely to be got, and that they were simply trying to turn out one or two members on this side of the House, so that they might have a majority. I say also that the statements made by the honorable member for Cheviot, together with some of the statements made by the new Ministers, will injure the credit of the colony. Such statements from private members are bad enough, but when they are made by gentlemen after they have taken the position of Ministers they still further injure the credit of the colony. Therefore I say the sooner we prevent them doing any more injury the better will it be for the colony, and the more will it redound to our own credit. I am perfectly willing to hear the Hon. the Native Minister's Statement on Friday; and, if we are not driven into late hours by a debate on that Statement, there will be plenty of time for it to be dealt with. But if it comes to half-past twelve o'clock, and we can take no new business, then the no-confidence motion will have to be made on Tuesday. When these honorable gentlemen stated that it would take a long time to discuss the want-of-confidence motion, it simply showed me plainly enough what their intentions were. They intended, knowing themselves to be in a minority, that the country should be governed by a minority in defiance of the will of a majority of this House. That statement shows plainly enough to members of this House the intentions of the honorable gentlemen who now hold the Government benches. I say there was no need whatever for even half-an-hour's discussion as to whether they should hold that position or not. Although I do not hold the leadership of the Opposition, and am only one of the rank-and-file, I think I may safely say we do not want to debate the question. If during the last three weeks there has not been discussion enough as to who should be on those benches, then there is no use in debating at all. That brings me to the fact that there is very little to say in favour of the debates that have taken place here. They only lead me to think that what I was taught as a schoolboy was true,—"If you want to learn good morals as to truthfulness, do not apply to a member of Parliament;" because, from what I have heard those honorable gentlemen say since they have gone over to that side of the House, and from comparing it with what they said when they were on this side, I am led to think that they do not believe what they themselves say. If *Hansard* were printed now, and the whole debate taken

word by word, we would see that the Government party have used their best endeavours to make black white and white no colour at all. They took the precedents which suited them when they were on this side of House. They ransacked the library, and told us that it was not constitutional for the Government to act as it then did. But, now that they have got on the Government benches, they tell us it is quite constitutional, and that as a Government they should have a fair trial. It may be constitutional or it may not, but we find that in times past precedents were established at certain periods. An individual went into the House of Commons and cleared away all precedents; and the great precedent he then established suited the country. I allude to Oliver Cromwell. We are now drifting into the very same state of things in New Zealand. We find precedents taken by a lawyer on this side of the House and twisted one way, while they are taken by another lawyer on the opposite side of the House and twisted another way. With all these precedents we simply come back to the question—Are we—as common-sense men, sent here to legislate and do our best for the Colony of New Zealand—are we to be tied down by those precedents, or are we simply to get the government of the country placed on a sound constitutional basis? Quite enough time has been lost. The whole question between the two sides is whether the debate should be taken on Friday or Tuesday, and if the Premier would consent to open the debate on Friday, and then adjourn till Tuesday, there would be an end to the difficulty. Such being the case, the Government have no right to say that we on this side of the House are stopping supplies. Nothing could be fairer than the statement of the leader of the Opposition. He said to the Treasurer, “We do not wish to bring on this no-confidence vote at all to-night, or to take advantage of the suspension of Standing Orders. If you promise to take it on Friday, we will give supplies.” This was refused by the Treasurer, and hence we are not responsible for the delay. I do not believe in the sincerity of the Government when they say they have the interests of the country at heart. They said that subsidies were owing to the local governing bodies, and salaries to the Civil servants, and that there was only £40,000 in the Treasury to meet them. If they really wished to make those payments, why did they not accept the offer of the leader of the Opposition to take the no-confidence debate on Friday? They alone will be responsible if any delay takes place, or if any injury is done. We have been told by the honorable member for Cheviot that the honorable member for the Thames when in Christchurch tried to delude the intelligent citizens there as regards their position. We have been termed greyhounds; now he has been termed a lame duck; and I do not know what term will be used next. But it seems to me that all this change was brought about by the arrangements regarding a public meeting held not long before last session. According to *Hansard*, we find that not long ago the same honorable member was sit-

ting on this side of the House, and that he had nothing but good words to say about the gentleman he was then following as leader. With regard to what has been said respecting our financial position, I do not think that during the four months the late Premier was Treasurer he could have got the finances into the bad state in which they are said to be. Then we have been told a great deal about something which was picked out of the pigeon-holes, and which was flourished about by the honorable member for Waikouaiti three days before it came before this House. When this matter was talked about in the lobbies, a great deal of capital was made out of it, and it was said that it was going to be proved to the House and the country that Sir George Grey was not the friend of the working-man. I know that when honorable gentlemen on this side of the House first heard of it they thought there was something in it. But the explanation was a very fair one. When that telegram was sent Home in February last, there was a great dearth of labour in the colony. In Canterbury, where I was at that time, farmers were crying out for labour, and they were paying 15s. or 16s. per day for harvesters. The very class of people of whom the present Government are the leaders were crying out for labour; and, seeing that that was the case in February, March, April, and May, the Premier was perfectly right in telegraphing Home for six thousand able-bodied men. Now, the reasons for this are manifold. In the first place, when the late Premier telegraphed to the Secretary of State for those able-bodied men, he did not send for paupers—or “powpers,” as one honorable gentleman called them. He simply sent for six thousand able-bodied men, and in doing so acted the part of a truly liberal Minister. The Secretary of State insulted this country by sending that despatch to the guardians of the poor. We find that in the Old Country distress was then prevalent. Two or three wars were raging; there were several meetings of trade unions; and there was a great deal of surplus labour in the Old Country. Those men were able and willing to work. They wished to come to some more favoured land. And when the Premier sent that telegram he tried to get that class of men. I say that in this colony we have a feeling of sympathy for those suffering people in the Home-country, and, if those six thousand men were sent out here, there is not a man in New Zealand who would not welcome them, even if they caused us a little temporary hardship, or perhaps some increased taxation. Then, again, we find that the gentlemen who are now on the Government benches first commenced bringing out immigrants who cost £20 to £25 each to the colony. In the late Premier's telegram, the Home Government were asked to send out these men free of charge; so that we should have saved at least £20 per head on six thousand immigrants, or in all £120,000. I say that was a masterpiece of finance on the part of the late Premier. Furthermore, we were asking for a loan in July last. The Loan Bill would be sent Home, and at the time the money was raised these six thousand men would arrive in the colony—be-

cause, of course, they would not all be sent out at once. Now, when this loan was raised, and the men came out here, seeing that we had a Liberal Government in power which had decided to throw open the land to the people of the colony, they would find employment on the public works, and be afterwards settled upon the public lands; so that there would be no loss at all to the colony. Taking these things into consideration, there is every reason to believe that sending that telegram Home in February last by the Premier was a wise act. There has been a financial crisis since then; consequently we have now an overplus of labour. That has no doubt been brought about solely by the financial crisis. We should not, as members of this House, allow such an accusation to be made without refuting it; and I think the refutation I have given is the true one. In the present state of affairs, I am prepared to take up this position: that, if the no-confidence motion is not allowed to be brought on, not one proposition which comes from the Government benches shall be discussed, if my vote can prevent it. We are now at the commencement of the session, whereas what has been referred to as occurring in 1877 took place at the end of that session, and I think the Government were then quite right in refusing to allow affairs to be upset. Now we are only commencing this session. We will have those important measures before us which the country is expecting, and we cannot have satisfactory measures unless we have gentlemen on the Government benches who command the confidence of the majority of this House. I hope and trust the Government will see their way clear to take the want-of-confidence motion late on Friday, and then adjourn the debate till Tuesday.

The House adjourned at a quarter to eleven o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 17th October, 1879.

First Readings—Indigenous Grasses—Benger Run 369—Grain Traffic on Railways—Gisborne Supreme Court Sittings—Stafford Town Telegraph and Money-Order Station—Police Court Payments by Stamps—Coal Mines—Waipawa Court—Napier-Manawatu Railway—Waikato Railway—Auckland City West—Christchurch City—Papakura Telegraph and Post Office—Pukekohe Courthouse—Clive Election—Inangahua Sheep Inspector—Nelson Waste Lands—Paunatahanui Telegraph Station—Native Statement.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Te Aro Reclamation Bill, Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill, Land Transfer Bill, Auckland Turnpike Bill, Heathcote Bridges Bill.

INDIGENOUS GRASSES.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Colonial Secretary, When the third and fourth parts of "The Indigenous Grasses of New Zealand" will be in the

Mr. Seddon

hands of members? Also, if it is the intention of the Government to forward copies to late members, who have received the first and second parts? He would, by leave of the House, add the following words to the question: "Also, if the Government would give instructions that copies of Parts I. and II. be placed in the hands of members of this House who were not members of last Parliament?"

Mr. HALL, in reply to the first part of the question, might say that about 150 copies of the third and fourth parts of the work would be ready to be issued in a few days, and would be placed in the hands of members then. The Government would also supply copies of the first and second parts to members who had not been in the House last session. They did not think, however, that they would be justified in sending copies of the third and fourth parts to late members.

BENGER RUN 369.

Mr. IRELAND asked the Minister of Lands, When the Government propose offering for sale the surveyed sections on Run 369, Benger District, intended to be opened under the pastoral deferred-payment system?

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that a Bill was now before Parliament which provided for the alterations in respect to dealing with the proceeds of the sale of these lands. As the law now stood, the proceeds went to the county absolutely. As soon as the amendment of the law had been considered by Parliament, the Government would take action, in the direction indicated by the honorable gentleman in his question, for the sale of these lands.

GRAIN TRAFFIC ON RAILWAYS.

Mr. BOWEN asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Government will make provision for weighing grain and other farm produce at the railway stations where such goods are received for transit? It used to be the habit in Canterbury to have all produce weighed at the railway-stations where it was delivered. That practice, however, had been given up. The farmers had reasonable grounds to complain that they were at present entirely at the mercy of the buyers, as the grain was only weighed after it had passed out of their hands at the place of shipment. He wished to know whether the Government would have the old system restored.

Mr. OLIVER said that as soon as he had noticed this question on the Paper he had placed himself in communication with the Commissioners of Railways of both Islands, and was still awaiting their report on the matter. He would acquaint the honorable gentleman with the nature of that report in a day or two.

GISBORNE SUPREME COURT SITTINGS.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Government, If they intend to cause a sitting of the Supreme Court to be holden at Gisborne, in the District of Poverty Bay, every six months?

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that, as far as the Government were at present informed, there was

no reason for holding a session of the Supreme Court at Gisborne. The District Court sat there periodically, and of course it would entail very considerable expense on the country if sittings of the Supreme Court were held there.

Mr. McDONALD said the District Court had never sat there.

Mr. ROLLESTON would be very glad to confer with the honorable gentleman on the subject, but his impression was, it did sit there.

Mr. McDONALD said it had never sat there yet.

STAFFORD TOWN TELEGRAPH AND MONEY-ORDER STATION.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether it is their intention to keep a promise made so far back as 1876 to have telegraph and money-order offices established at Stafford Town, Arahura District, Westland? In 1876 the honorable member for Kaiapoi, who was then in the Ministry, paid a visit to the West Coast, and made a promise that a telegraph and money-order office should be established at this town. The population of the town was from 1,000 to 1,500, and there was no doubt that it was very necessary that such an office should be established there.

Mr. HALL referred to *Hansard*, 1877, where he found a question put by the late member for Hokitika (Mr. Barff) as to "Why the sum of £550 voted last year for the erection of a post office and telegraph office at Goldsbrough has not been expended?" To that question Mr. Larnach replied, "that the General Manager of the Telegraph Department informed him it was not the intention this year to erect a telegraph office at Goldsbrough, as there was no pressing necessity for it." Goldsbrough, practically, was the same place as that referred to by the honorable gentleman in his question. The business at Stafford Town was not increasing; there was a telegraph and money-order office at Kumara, about eight miles distant. Under these circumstances, the Government did not feel justified, without further information, in incurring the expense involved in the establishment of another office of the same kind at Stafford Town.

Mr. SEDDON. — Stafford Town and Goldsbrough are two distinct towns.

POLICE COURT PAYMENTS BY STAMPS.

Mr. ANDREWS asked, If it is the intention of the Government to discontinue the present system of payment by stamps at the several Police Courts? He believed he expressed the sentiment of the great majority of the people who had to attend Police Courts that this was a most inconvenient way of payment.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that at present he had not much information on the matter, but further inquiry would be made into it. He understood that some inconvenience had arisen through the arrangement which had been made; and the Government would, after inquiry, endeavour to remedy the inconvenience, either by making the Clerks of Courts distributors of stamps or otherwise.

COAL MINES.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Premier, If the Government will this session introduce a Bill for the regulation and management of coal mines? The late Government, he believed, had a Bill prepared for dealing with all sorts of mines—coal mines and gold mines—but he had been advised that it was of such a cumbrous character that it would not be likely to pass this session. He was also informed by persons competent to judge that it was absolutely necessary that a Coal Mines Regulation Bill should be passed, and that it would not take long to get it through.

Mr. OLIVER replied that it was the intention of the Government to introduce such a Bill this session, and circulate it amongst those who were interested in coal mines, so as to obtain their opinion upon it.

WAIPAWA COURT.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister of Justice, If he will lay before this House the correspondence relating to the appointment of Mr. William Cowper Smith as Justice of the Peace; also a letter from the Justices of the Waipawa Petty Sessions Court protesting against the appointment; why that letter was not acknowledged or replied to; and whether there is any record of any inquiry as to Mr. Smith's previous character and fitness for the position of Justice of the Peace, after the receipt of the remonstrance from the Bench? Also, whether it was proposed to appoint Mr. Smith to the Licensing Bench of the Waipawa District; and, if so, who recommended such appointment? He asked this question at the request of the Justices of the Peace of the Petty Sessions Court of the Waipawa District, who considered themselves aggrieved in consequence of no notice having been taken of the official letter which they had addressed to the Minister of Justice on the subject, and by the action which the late Minister of Justice had taken in making these appointments.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the honorable gentleman's question contained several points. The Government would be willing to lay before the House the correspondence which had taken place with regard to the appointment of Mr. William Cowper Smith as a Justice of the Peace; also the letter from the Justices of the Waipawa Petty Sessions Court protesting against the appointment. The reason why that letter was not replied to he was not in a position to state. There was no record of any inquiry as to Mr. Smith's previous character and fitness for the position of Justice of the Peace. There was no record which showed that any definite proposition was made to appoint Mr. Smith to the Licensing Bench of the Waipawa District; but there were a few words of a minute which indicated that there had been such a proposal. It did not appear who recommended the appointment.

NAPIER-MANAWATU RAILWAY.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will have prepared, and laid before this House, a detailed statement accounting for the expenditure of £28,239 in the year 1877-78,

and £48,167 in the year ended 30th June, 1879 (as stated in the Public Works Statements), on the Napier-Manawatu Railway; also, of the liabilities stated to exist at the same time on account of the same line, amounting to £31,745? He asked the question because he was unable, from the information contained in the last Public Works Statement, to ascertain what he required to know. After very careful inquiry, he was unable to find that anything like the sums of money stated had been expended.

Mr. OLIVER replied that the return would be prepared and presented to the House.

WAIKATO RAILWAY.

Mr. WHYTE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Government intend to fence any part of the railway line in the districts of Waipa and Waikato? He asked this question because the want of this fence had been the cause of great loss to small settlers along the line of railway. One small farmer had lost as many as sixteen head of cattle—nearly all he had. This, being one case out of many, was sufficient to show the necessity for this work; but that was a mere trifle compared to the loss of human life which might be caused through accidents. A serious accident did happen to a train, consisting of a large number of loaded trucks, some empty ones, and some passenger cars. In that case, the loaded trucks remained on the line, the empty ones were smashed, and the line was blocked for nearly twenty-four hours. The passenger cars fortunately remained on the line; but, if they had been farther forward, they undoubtedly would have met with the same fate as the empty trucks, and a great many lives would have been lost. He was aware that this was a very large work, and would cost a considerable sum of money; but, if it were not carried out, something serious would be very likely to ensue.

Mr. OLIVER replied that, as the honorable gentleman stated, this was a very large work, and it would require a very considerable expenditure. Three-fourths of the line through the district referred to was already fenced, and he would promise that other portions, where the lives of people were endangered, should be fenced; but, as he said in reply to a similar question a day or two previously, this was a very large question indeed.

AUCKLAND CITY WEST.

Mr. SPEAKER.—All other business will now have to be suspended, as the hour has arrived which was fixed by the House for the appointment of Committees to try the allegations in the petitions against the return of the two honorable members for Auckland City West and the honorable member for Christchurch City (Sir G. Grey). With regard to the first petition, I think it my duty to inform the House that I find myself in a difficulty, and it will be for the House to find some means of solving that difficulty. As honorable members are aware, Election Petition Committees consist of seven members. That is the number prescribed by law, and it is arrived at in this way: The petitioner has the right to nominate one member, the sitting member has the

right to nominate one member, and the Speaker has the right to nominate one member. That makes three members. Then, by eliminating alternately members objected to by either party, four more members are appointed. The Committee thus consists of seven members. In this case the petition is against two members, both of whom may claim the right to appoint a member of the Committee, and, if they are allowed to do so, the Committee will at the outset consist of eight members, which is contrary to law. Then, a member and a petitioner have practically the right of putting on two members each, by striking off alternately certain members till only four members are left. There is no provision that the two members petitioned against should act conjointly, and if each member, as well as the petitioner, in striking the Committee, were to leave a residuum of two each, the Committee would amount to ten members instead of seven. These are difficulties that I cannot solve, and I must ask the House to consider them and devise means to solve the difficulty that presents itself in the matter.

Mr. HISLOP.—Shall I be in order in moving the motion of which I have given notice?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think so.

Mr. HISLOP.—Then I propose, by way of amendment, Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper, which is as follows: "That the petition of Joseph Newman against the return of Messrs. Wallis and Hurst be referred to a Committee to inquire whether the forms of this House and the requirements of the Election Petitions Acts have been complied with by the petitioner, and to report to the House within seven days; and that the consideration of the appointment of an Election Committee be postponed until after such report. The Committee to consist of Mr. Bowen, Mr. J. B. Fisher, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Tole, and the mover; four to form a quorum." I gave notice of this motion because the honorable member for Auckland City West (Dr. Wallis) asked me to act for him in selecting a Committee. The same difficulties which you, Sir, mention presented themselves to me, and, after consideration of the subject and consultation with persons on both sides of the House, I came to the conclusion that the best way to get over the difficulty was to have a Committee of inquiry, as is usual in cases where it is not convenient for the House to inquire itself. Now, as you have stated, under the Election Petitions Act the mode of procedure is that the Committee should be struck in the same manner as a jury, alternately by the petitioner and the person petitioned against. In "The Election Petitions Act, 1862," it is stated that—

"Every petition which shall be presented to the House of Representatives complaining of an undue election or return of a member of the House of Representatives, or complaining that no return has been made to any writ issued for the election of any member of the House of Representatives, or that no return has been made within the time within which any writ is made returnable, or that any return is not according to the requisition of the writ, or complaining of

Mr. Ormond

any special matters contained in any such return, shall be deemed an election petition."

It becomes a question whether a petition against two members comes within the terms of that section, and the only place where we can find an interpretation of that section is in the Election Petitions Act of 1858, and that is the section you have referred to. I shall not at present argue the question for the purpose of showing whether this is an election petition or not, inasmuch as I think it would be inconvenient, and only a waste of time, as it could be done much more expeditiously by the appointment of a Committee in the manner suggested. I desire only to show a *prima facie* case, and this what I have said, taken with your remarks, shows clearly there is. But there are other matters arising out of the petition to which I should like to refer. The first of these is, whether the petitioner has complied with the 2nd section of "The Elections Petitions Act, 1862," which states, *inter alia*—

"Every petition shall allege the specific grounds on which the return is impugned; and no other grounds than such as are stated in the petition shall be investigated.

"No election petition shall be received by the House of Representatives, unless the provisions, stipulations, and requirements of 'The Election Petitions Act, 1858,' and of this Act, which should be performed and obeyed previously to the presentation thereof, shall have been duly performed and obeyed by the persons subscribing and promoting the same, and a certificate, signed by the Examiner of Election Bonds, to that effect, shall have been indorsed on such petition."

I am aware that under the procedure at Home it was not necessary to allege the specific acts on which the charges of bribery, corruption, or treating were based. A reference to the Act at Home and to these clauses will show that the Home Act is not so carefully drawn in this respect as the Act we have at the present time; and there is this to be considered: that, under the Act of which the Act of 1862 is an amendment, almost the same words are used as are used in the Home Act, so that the Amendment Act of 1862 must have been intended to require more strictness as to the form of the petition. I think it might be well to have that matter also referred to the Committee, so that we may have a precedent hereafter. There is also another smaller question affecting this petition in a slight degree. I would direct your attention, Sir, to the fact that the affidavit which is required by the Act before anything can be done is incomplete.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I rise to a point of order. The motion of the honorable member is for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into a petition before the House. Although powers are given to the representative Chamber to try such questions as these, both at Home and here, this House has delegated its powers purposely to Committees by the Acts of 1858 and 1862. I respectfully submit, therefore, that a discussion in this House as to whether the forms have been complied with is out of place, inasmuch as this is not the proper body to test this question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not understand that the honorable member is now proposing to appoint a Committee to decide the question of the merits of the petition: such a procedure would not be in order; but a difficulty has arisen, and there seems to be no way out of it except by proceeding in a certain way. It is for the House to determine the way to be pursued.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I understand the honorable member is arguing the rights and wrongs of the forms to be gone through—the form of the affidavit, for one thing.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think the honorable member for Waitaki is out of order.

Mr. HISLOP.—I would like the honorable member for Waipa to adopt the recommendation he gave me the other night, and, before he rises to a point of order, ascertain something as to the rules of the House. It is exceedingly inconvenient to be interrupted—

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Hislop) is quite in order.

Mr. HISLOP.—I recognize the voice of the honorable member for Geraldine.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I rise to a point of order. I understand the honorable member for Waipa was quite entitled to raise a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Waipa had a right to rise to a point of order; but, having heard him, I have ruled that the member for Waitaki (Mr. Hislop) is in order. I rule that he is in order.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I said the honorable member for Waipa was entitled to submit a point of order to your ruling.

Mr. TOLE.—I rise to a point of order. The honorable member for Geraldine, on each occasion that he rose to a point of order, had a walking-stick in his hand.

Mr. HISLOP.—Surely an honorable member, when he is interrupted by another honorable member on a point of order, can recommend to that honorable member a course of action for the future. I thought the honorable member for Geraldine had sufficient intelligence, and had been sufficiently long in the House, to know that. The affidavit, by the Stamp Act, requires to be stamped with a half-crown stamp. But, in this instance, the affidavit required by the Statute is not stamped; and to that extent I believe the documents are incomplete. This is a matter which might also be referred to the Committee. I submit that any honorable member petitioned against has a right to have all the requirements of the Election Petitions Act, and all other matters affecting the petition, complied with before the petition is proceeded with. I stated before, and I believe you have ruled to the same effect, Sir, that it would be inconvenient at present to go on with the election petitions under such circumstances, leaving it to the House, when the matter arises, to solve the doubts which have arisen. I submit that, looking at it from a fair point of view, the course I have suggested to the House is the proper one to follow.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable member for Waitaki proposes to refer to a Select Committee the

question generally, whether the provisions and requirements of the Election Petitions Acts have been complied with. Now, "The Election Petitions Act, 1862," provides as follows:—

"No election petition shall be received by the House of Representatives unless the provisions, stipulations, and requirements of 'The Election Petitions Act, 1858,' and of this Act, which should be performed and obeyed previously to the presentation thereof, shall have been duly performed and obeyed by the persons subscribing and promoting the same, and a certificate, signed by the Examiner of Election Bonds, to that effect, shall have been indorsed on such petition."

The petition is referred, therefore, to an officer called the Examiner of Election Bonds, to examine and certify whether all those requirements have been complied with; and upon his certificate the law provides that the petition shall be referred to a Committee. Now, I have the petition in my hand, and here is the required certificate:—

"I certify that the provisions, stipulations, and requirements of 'The Election Petitions Act, 1858,' and 'The Election Petitions Act, 1862,' have been duly performed and obeyed by the persons subscribing and promoting this petition. —F. E. CAMPBELL, Examiner of Election Bonds."

That being the case, I submit there is no occasion for the Committee proposed by the honorable gentleman. If there is anything else—if there be any other informality, of a technical nature or otherwise, that can be gone into by the Election Petitions Committee—if there is anything in the petition itself which would invalidate it, the Committee itself is the proper tribunal for determining the question. Therefore I think the House will be simply wasting its time if it refers to a separate Select Committee the task which properly devolves on the Election Petitions Committee. With regard to the question submitted to the House by yourself, Sir, as to the course which it should adopt in the difficulty which has arisen through this petition proceeding from one person against two members of the House, I submit that the best course to adopt—if we cannot carry out the law in its strict letter—would be that we should, in the exercise of our power to determine all matters relating to the election of members, adopt a course most nearly akin in spirit to the Act itself. In this case there are two persons petitioned against. If each of those persons appoint one member, or, rather, scratch off the name of one person, and the petitioner can scratch off the name of only one, the Committee would, obviously, be unfairly constituted. The course which I would suggest to be taken is this: that the sitting members should decide whether they will act in this matter separately or jointly. If they agree to act jointly, then they should appoint some person to represent them on the Committee. If they agree to act separately, then a separate Committee should be appointed for each; and, in that case, the petitioner could scratch off one name, and the sitting member another name. We should then be carrying out the spirit and intention of the Act, as to the exact words of

Mr. Hall

which there is some difficulty. I trust, therefore, that the House will not allow the proceedings to be obstructed by the motion of the honorable member for Waitaki. If the House agrees to the course I have suggested, I will move a resolution to that effect.

Mr. TOLE.—The honorable member who has just sat down is mistaken as to the functions of an Election Petitions Committee. It is not the duty of an Election Petitions Committee to try questions of a preliminary or technical nature in regard to any election petition. The duty of the Committee is to determine whether there has been an undue election or return—whether the return has been made according to the recommendation in the writ. The question to be considered is, whether the document is in proper form as required by law. The certificate of an officer of the House, stating that the requirements of the Act have been properly complied with, does not conclusively bind this House by any means. On the face of the document there may be some omission—some very serious and grave omission—which the officers of the House might possibly overlook, but which the House itself might discover. With regard to the affidavit, it is perfectly correct that that document should be stamped. Under the Stamp Act of 1875 all declarations were liable to a two-and-sixpenny stamp, and that is an essential element in connection with the document. The document should have that stamp upon it in order to make it valid and complete. On the other hand, the bond which accompanies the petition is specially exempt, under the general exemptions, which say, "All bonds to Her Majesty are exempt." This is a bond to Her Majesty, and with regard to it the provisions of the Act have been complied with. Such is not the case, however, with regard to the affidavit, which is of as much importance as the bond itself. I should like to point out this distinction: that it is not the function of an Election Petitions Committee to consider a question of form. They are to decide the question of the validity or otherwise of the return of a member who has been petitioned against. Therefore I think the Committee moved for is a necessary one, and that its appointment is reasonable under the circumstances.

Mr. PITT.—Sir, I think the motion proposed by the honorable member for Waitaki does not go far enough to get the House out of the difficulty suggested by yourself. That motion only goes to this extent: to inquire and report whether the forms of this House and the requirements of the Election Petitions Acts have been complied with by the petitioner. The difficulty suggested by you, Sir, is as to what is to be done now by the House—namely, in selecting the Committee. The honorable mover of the resolution has referred to certain technical defects in the petition, and he has raised the objection that these cannot be dealt with by the Election Petitions Committee. With all respect for his opinion, I think, if he will refer to Cox and Grady on Election Law, page 359, he will find that technical objections are not allowed to have any force in these matters. It is there stated

that "no technical or formal objections will be allowed to prevail where the matters objected to can be rectified by the Judge without prejudice to either side." The Committee is in the position of a Judge. As the Hon. the Premier has pointed out, the Clerk of the House decides, before an election petition is received, whether or not certain forms have been complied with, and he has to certify to the House whether these have been complied with or not. That he has done, and the petition has been received. Therefore in that respect I do not see what good purpose can be served by the appointment of the proposed Committee. As I said before, Sir, the honorable and learned member has not got over the difficulty suggested by you. I think the course suggested by the Hon. the Premier is the only one out of the difficulty, and no doubt there may be a difficulty in complying with the literal terms of the Act. I think in these matters we should observe what has been the practice of Parliament in England at a time when the law there in reference to election petitions was, if not identical with, at all events very similar to, our own Act. At present, as honorable members are aware, election petitions in England are tried before a Judge. Prior to that, they were tried by a Standing Committee of the House of Commons; and before that, by virtue of the provisions of an Act of 10 George III., c. 16, and known as "the Grenville Act," the practice was to appoint a Committee of forty-nine members of the House by ballot, and afterwards to reduce the number to thirteen. The petitioner nominated one member, and the sitting members, who had to act jointly, nominated one member, of the Committee. The same authority from which I have already quoted, in reference to the Election Petitions Act at present in force in England, says, on page 364, "The Act also provides that two or more candidates may be made respondents to the same petition; but, for all purposes of this Act, such petition shall be deemed to be a separate petition against each respondent." Therefore I think we may act in the way suggested by the Premier. The practice of the Imperial Parliament has been followed in the present instance in petitioning against two members jointly. I think honorable members will find that, in reports of election petition cases in the Imperial Parliament, no case will be found of separate petitions having been presented against two members. Sir, it seems to me that the proposed Committee will not serve the purpose which the honorable the mover has in view in getting over the difficulty mentioned by yourself. As the Hon. the Premier has suggested, if we cannot follow out the exact wording of the Act, we should, as far as possible, carry out the spirit and intention of the Act. As the honorable member has also suggested, I think the sitting members must say whether they will act jointly or separately.

Mr. J. B. FISHER. — Referring to the text quoted by the honorable member for Nelson City, I consider that it thoroughly supports the position taken up by the honorable member for Waitaki. The honorable member for Waitaki says

that the question whether the petition is in form and receivable by the House cannot be tried by the Election Petitions Committee, to which it is proposed to refer it. The honorable member for Nelson City says that, according to the English practice, this question cannot be tried before a Judge sitting as an Election Committee. The one honorable gentleman says that these matters cannot be tried before the Election Petitions Committee, and the other says that they cannot be tried before a Judge sitting as an Election Committee, and that these questions of form will not be amended by either of those tribunals except where that can be done without any injury to the parties. An Election Petitions Judge in England has the same functions as an Election Petitions Committee in New Zealand, and both honorable members are consequently arguing to the same conclusion. There is one very strong objection to this petition, which exists on the face of it — namely, the bond put in under the Act. I say that this petition cannot be accepted or dealt with as a mere matter of course, in justice to the members petitioned against. In the first place, the bond is only for the sum of £200 in support of a petition against two members. Now, the Act requires that in regard to every petition a bond should be entered into for the sum of £200 in respect of such petition; clearly implying that the House considered that a sum of £200 at least should be provided to meet the expenses of each member petitioned against, supposing the petition turned out to be informal or insufficient. If the House deal with this petition as against the two members, the amount of security should be £400. If the security is for £200, the two members have only £100 each to defray the costs. I submit that the petition, on the face of it, is so utterly informal, and so entirely out of compliance with the provisions of the Act, that it ought not to be received and ought not to be dealt with. It ought, in the first place, to be referred to a Committee to ascertain whether the requirements of the Statute have been complied with. I submit that, if the House itself will not see that the Statutes made for the protection of its members are complied with in cases of this sort, it cannot expect the outside public to respect the Statutes. If the Statutes of the colony make provision that, in cases of election petitions, certain formalities shall be complied with—that the petitioners shall provide certain securities, and that the affidavits shall be in a certain form—and the House does not see that these requirements are complied with, we cannot expect people outside to respect the Statute laws of the colony. I intend to vote for the motion proposed by the honorable member for Waitaki, as I think it is a perfectly fair and legitimate one. The first thing we have to do is to settle whether this petition is informal—whether it is a petition at all in the eyes of the law as against the two sitting members. I say, on the face of it, the petition is informal—out of order—and ought not to be received by the House. If the question raised were one of privilege, the position taken by the Hon. the Premier would be a good one. But it is not: it is a

question of petition, and it is our duty, sitting here as representatives of the people and as representatives of the law, to see that the requirements of the law are complied with in all petitions which are brought down to this House.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I move, as an amendment, That the members for Auckland City West (Messrs. Wallis and Hurst) do decide whether they will act jointly or separately in the matter of the petition of Joseph Newman against the return of the said members. That, if they act jointly, they do jointly strike off the names of members at the striking of the Committee, but that, if they act separately, separate Committees be appointed to decide upon the merits of the petition as it affects each of these members.

Mr. DE LA TOUR.—Is there not an amendment already?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The motion of the honorable member for Waitaki must be treated as a substantive motion, and the Order of the day as postponed for the present.

Mr. FINN.—I beg to draw the attention of the House to section 10 of the Election Petitions Act of 1858, which is very conclusive on this point. It is as follows:—

"No election petition shall be received unless at the time it is presented to the House it shall be indorsed by a certificate, under the hand of the Examiner, that the bond hereinbefore required has been entered into and received by him, with the affidavit thereto annexed."

I have looked at the petition, and I find that it does not bear the indorsement mentioned. I therefore submit that it cannot be received.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There is the Act of 1862.

Mr. FINN.—I have looked at the repealing Act of 1862, and I find that the section I have quoted is not repealed. I beg to point out that the Examiner has complied with section 2 of the amending Act only.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I am informed by the Examiner of Bonds that the certificate on the petition is under the following provision of the Act of 1862:—

"No election petition shall be received by the House of Representatives unless the provisions, stipulations, and requirements of 'The Election Petitions Act, 1858,' and of this Act, which should be performed and obeyed previously to the presentation thereof, shall have been duly performed and obeyed by the persons subscribing and promoting the same, and a certificate, signed by the Examiner of Election Bonds, to that effect, shall have been indorsed on such petition."

The certificate prescribed under the Act of 1862 embraces the requirements of the Act of 1858.

Mr. FINN.—But I submit, Sir, that that would be in addition to section 10 of the Act of 1858. Section 10 has not been repealed, and until such repeal is effected I presume it is in force.

Mr. PITT.—I should like to ask your ruling, Sir, as to whether, the petition having been received by the House, this objection can be taken.

Mr. GIBBORNE.—On that point I would state that when the objection was raised you ruled, Sir, at the time, that you could not decide

Mr. J. B. Fisher

such a question, and would leave it for the House itself to settle on a subsequent occasion.

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is a provision for objections, and I understand that, according to the 12th clause of the Act of 1858, the time for objecting to the sureties expired at twelve o'clock to-day.

Mr. FINN.—What I submit, Sir, is that this petition cannot be received by the House until the Examiner of Bonds has advised you that the requirements of section 10 have been complied with. I have looked at the petition, and I find it has not been done.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Is it not covered by the certificate required under section 2 of the Act of 1862?

Mr. FINN.—I submit not, Sir. That is simply an addition to section 10, which, being still unrepealed, must be complied with.

Mr. HISLOP.—I submit that the honorable member for Wakatipu is right, inasmuch as section 2 says, "Section one of 'The Election Petitions Act, 1858,' is hereby repealed, and in lieu thereof it is hereby enacted;" and the provision in accordance with which the Examiner has certified is simply that contained in section 2, which repealed, and was substituted for, section 1 of the Act of 1858. But, in addition to the requirements of section 2 of the Act of 1862, that ought to be done which has been pointed out by the honorable member for Wakatipu.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think, even if the point were established, that it would be my duty to rule the petition out of order in consequence of the point which has been raised. I do not know what more the honorable member can expect under the 10th clause of the Act of 1858 than what has been indorsed on the petition by the Examiner of Bonds under the 2nd clause of the Act of 1862, which enacts that the certificate under that clause shall cover the requirements of the Act of 1858. There is only one certificate contemplated by the last Act, not two distinct certificates under the respective Acts.

Mr. FINN.—I would like to call your attention, Sir, to clause 14 of the Act of 1858, which provides for the manner in which the Examiner shall satisfy himself as to the sufficiency or otherwise of the sureties.

Mr. PITT.—He has satisfied himself.

Mr. FINN.—He has been satisfied on the affidavit which has been presented, and has made no inquiry whatever. Clause 14 provides the machinery for inquiring as to the sufficiency of the sureties. I say the petition cannot be received by the House until the Examiner has complied with section 10, which says,—

"No election petition shall be received unless at the time it is presented to the House it shall be indorsed by a certificate under the hand of the Examiner, that the bond hereinbefore required has been entered into and received by him, with the affidavit thereto annexed."

He must certify that the bond was received, though we know for a fact that he has received it, and that it is now in his possession.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Examiner has certified

that the requirements of the Acts have been complied with.

Mr. FINN.—He has not acted under section 14 of the Act of 1858, which says that the Examiner “shall inquire into the alleged insufficiency of the sureties objected to on the grounds stated in the notice of objection, but on no other grounds.” Now, no objection could be made in this House before the petition was presented.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The petition was presented ten days ago, and the members petitioned against have had ample opportunity to object to the sureties. They had up to twelve o'clock to-day, and they knew it.

Mr. FINN.—It is not the sureties I object to at all; it is the petition itself. I simply say that the certificate on the petition is not sufficient, and does not comply with section 10 of the Act. If you have any doubt on this point, Sir, I would ask you to take time to consider the matter. I have given the question some consideration, and cannot come to any other conclusion but that section 10 has not been complied with. If I could, I should be most happy in pointing it out to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The objection taken is a technical one, and, to my mind, has not been established, and I think it would be better for me to recommend that the House should adopt either the course proposed by the honorable member for Waitaki or one of the two proposals made by the Government. I do not think I should be justified in rejecting the petition on the ground of the informality which has been suggested, and which I consider unproved.

Mr. KELLY.—It appears to me, Sir, that there is nothing in the objection urged by the honorable member for Wakatipu, as the 16th section of “The Interpretation Act, 1878,” provides that, when an original Act is amended, the amending Act is incorporated in the original Act, and both Acts are read as one Act; and, if two clauses of the original and amending Acts are in conflict, the latest declaration of the Legislature—namely, the Act of 1862—must be taken as our guide. I do not think there is sufficient in the objection to invalidate the petition.

Mr. FINN.—I beg to point out that by “The Election Petitions Act Amendment Act, 1862,” only certain clauses of the Act of 1858 are repealed—namely, clauses 2, 3, 7, and 31. Section 10 is not repealed, and I dare say honorable gentlemen will agree with me that, unless a section of a particular Act is repealed, any Acts passed thereafter cannot affect it—it must remain in force.

Mr. GISBORNE.—I would point out this difference between the proposal of the honorable member for Waitaki and that of the Minister of Lands: The motion proposed by the honorable member for Waitaki says that the petition is informal, and that it should not be received by the House. We propose that a Committee should inquire into this point, and recommend to the House whether the petition is formal or informal. That should be decided evidently by a Committee other than the Election Committee. The duties of the Election Committee are confined to con-

sidering the merits of the case. They have nothing to do with the question of whether the petition which has been referred to them by the House was properly received by the House or not. They cannot go behind the reference of the House. The House has chosen to refer the petition to the Committee, and it must decide on the merits of the case disclosed in the petition. But the amendment of the Minister of Lands is only directed to meet the difficulty involved in the fact that the petitions against two members are included in one petition. It does not meet the other question of whether, on other grounds, the petition can be properly received or not. That is why I think we should vote for the motion of the honorable member for Waitaki in preference to the amendment of the Minister of Lands. I cannot at all agree with the doctrine propounded by the Premier, that, in a case like this, when the law expressly states what should be done, if it has not been done we should go as near skin to the requirements of the law as possible. That is a monstrous doctrine to apply in a case involving the construction of a penal Statute.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. GISBORNE.—I say it is a penal Statute, for a man may not only lose his seat in the House, but there are very grave penalties for bribery.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman misinterprets my argument.

Mr. GISBORNE.—The honorable gentleman states that the Elections Petitions Act—which, by the way, modifies and overrides the clause in the Constitution Act which allows this House to be the sole judge of the validity or otherwise of the election of any member—prescribes certain formalities to be gone through before a petition can be received, or before it can be acted upon. My honorable friend says that that is true, but, if we cannot comply with the requirements of the Election Petitions Act, we must go as near as possible akin to it.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman has misunderstood my argument. The point of it to which he has just referred had relation to the highly-technical objection which has been taken by the honorable member for Waitaki. But what I say is this: Here is a case which the law has not provided for—a case in which a petition is presented against two members—and, in that case, where we cannot act upon the strict letter of the law, because it is not provided for, we must take the spirit of the law.

Mr. GISBORNE.—I say the law has provided for it. The law says there shall be a petition against “every” member. That plainly means that there shall be a separate petition against each member petitioned against, and that no petition shall be against two members jointly. And, to show that that is the case, in the English law which is in force now there is an express provision on that point, which says that, if there is a petition against two members jointly, that petition may, for the purposes of the Act, be held in each case to be a separate petition. There is no such clause in our present Act. Therefore, if there is one petition against two mem-

bers, the petition is alleged to be informal, and not in compliance with the Act, which requires that there shall be separate petitions against two members. If proper security has not been given, why should the members petitioned against be subject to penalties and pecuniary loss? This petition may be frivolous and vexatious, and yet the member finds that the petition is received without proper security being given. In this case only one-half the security required is given. In the construction of a penal law, we should act literally and strictly in accordance with its provisions. My object in rising now was to point out the essential difference between the motion of the honorable member for Waitaki and the motion of the Hon. the Minister of Lands. The motion of the Minister of Lands only meets part of the case. The motion of my honorable friend the member for Waitaki raises the question of the formality of the petition on various grounds, and also the question whether it is right that two members should be petitioned against in one petition by the same petitioner. There can surely be no objection to the honorable gentleman's motion. We simply refer the question to a Committee to report and give their recommendation. That is the usual course pursued when a doubt arises about certain facts, and when the law has not been complied with. If there is any allegation of disqualification against any member, what is the usual course? The House does not decide on the spot and at the moment. It refers the matter to a Committee to report thereon, and, when it receives the report of the Committee, it decides one way or the other. I say that in such a case as this you should pursue a similar course: appoint a Committee to go fully into the matter; let them, if necessary, take counsel's advice upon it; and upon their report let the House adopt whatever course is most desirable.

Mr. FINN.—I presume that in a matter of this kind honorable members will take care that no injustice is done to the petitioner or to the petitioned against. If this petition is allowed to go on, a great injustice will be done to those gentlemen petitioned against, unless the provision of the Act as regards the giving of the bond is complied with. If this petition is dismissed by a Committee of the House, the petitioner will have to pay the costs of both parties, and each will be entitled to a certificate for the amount. We all know that a petition of this kind must lead to considerable expense, probably £200; but, supposing you allow each costs to the amount of £200—you are called upon by the Act to give a certificate of costs. Here we have but one bond. How are they to recover these costs? The manner is provided by section 42 of the Act, which says that the bonds shall be put in suit. Therefore I submit that the petitioner, supposing that the petition were dismissed, would only be called upon to pay £200, whereas each member would be entitled to a bond with a penalty of £200, with two sureties of £100 each, as provided by section 3 of the amending Act of 1862. And I submit there is no provision in the Act to entitle the petitioned against to recover

more costs than the amount mentioned in the bond. If the costs be not paid, section 42 provides that the Speaker shall, upon application of the party—it does not say “parties”—entitled to such costs and expenses, cause the bond to be put in suit, and the money recovered on such bond shall be applied in such order as the Committee shall have directed in satisfaction so far as the sum will extend. How do you put that into effect, unless the petitioner is a man of means? We do not know whether the petitioner is a man of means or not. With that we have nothing to do. All we have got to see is, that the petitioned against have good security for the payment of their costs, if the House should award them any.

Mr. BRANDON.—I understand, Sir, that you ruled about the question of bonds and sureties. As regards the petitioned against, I think the case cited by the honorable member for Nelson City is in point, and decisive. Then, Sir, with regard to the objections to the sureties: that, too, is clear enough. Clause 11 of the Act of 1858 says,—

“On or before the day when any petition shall be presented to the House, the bonds and affidavits and bank receipts (if any) shall be opened to the inspection of all parties concerned.”

Now, Sir, you will see why that should be:—

“It shall be lawful for any sitting member petitioned against, or for any electors petitioning and admitted parties to defend the election or return, to object to the sureties or any of them who shall have entered into such bond, on the ground of insufficiency, or that a surety is dead or cannot be found, from the want of a sufficient description in the bond, or that a person named in the bond has not duly executed the same.”

Therefore, Sir, first of all, it lies open for the inspection of all interested, and then the Examiner is to inquire into the sufficiency or otherwise of the sureties. Then it is provided,—

“As soon as any such statement shall be received by the Examiner he shall appoint a day for hearing such objection, not less than three nor more than five days from the day on which he shall have received such statement, and the petitioner and his agent shall be allowed to examine and take copies of every such statement.”

Then, Sir, I apprehend it is the duty of the Examiner to inquire into the sufficiency of the sureties, and, if he states that the requirements of the Act have been complied with, that is sufficient; and, if no objection to the sureties is lodged in accordance with the Act, no person can come here and make objection. If there are any objections to the sureties, these objections are bound to be sent in to the Examiner, who will inquire into the objections and decide the same.

Mr. FINN.—I admit the correctness of the honorable and learned member for Wellington Country District. But the point is—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Wakatipu has already spoken to the amendment.

Mr. PITT.—I have not yet spoken to the amendment. I do not wish it to be understood that I am offering my opinion as a lawyer: I am speaking simply as an ordinary member of the

House upon this question. I should wish to point out, with reference to what fell from the honorable member for Totara, that, if the Election Petitions Act does not provide for a special case like this, then necessarily we are remitted to the Constitution Act, which provides that, until provision is made otherwise in that behalf by law, this House shall be judges, without appeal, of the validity of the election of each member.

Mr. STEWART.—I apprehend, Sir, that upon this question every honorable member will speak with that degree of impartiality which its importance demands. I have not looked into this case very carefully. I have examined generally the Statutes and some of the authorities referred to in the text-books; and at first sight the objection to this petition does seem insuperable. The Act provides a very clear and simple remedy to any person who wishes to petition against the return of any member to this House, but it does not provide any course whereby proceedings can be taken against two or more members in one petition. Indeed, if it were otherwise, most serious consequences might result. Supposing somebody petitioned against the return of my colleagues and myself, and that the three were included in one petition, we should be deprived, undoubtedly, of the right to sit here and vote upon questions affecting ourselves; and, if we were all included in one petition, this injustice would result: that the mouths of my colleagues would be closed when really the proceedings should have been directed only against myself. That was clearly never intended by the Act. Another objection which it is difficult to get over is this: The petitioner charges here bribery and corrupt practices against the two members for Auckland City West. This assumes that the acts were joint—that the circumstances which constitute the offence here were joint, sanctioned by both parties. Now, supposing two Committees are appointed, and one Committee finds that there was no bribery or corrupt practices, and the other Committee finds there was—

Mr. HALL.—There might have been bribery in the one case and not in the other.

Mr. STEWART.—This petition treats it as a joint act on the part of the two honorable gentlemen. It is a petition against these two members for certain acts which constitute bribery and other corrupt practices. The thing is absurd at first sight that two members can be petitioned against in one petition. These difficulties do present themselves to one's mind, and the easy and jaunty way in which the Premier wished to get over the law is certainly very amusing. If the wishes of the Premier be given effect to, then supposing Mr. Hurst says, "I object to being tried with Dr. Wallis," and Dr. Wallis says, "I will not separate myself from Mr. Hurst"? You make it an election for one, but will require an election from both.

Mr. HALL.—You cannot marry two people unless they are both agreed.

Mr. STEWART.—But they are married now by the petition. What I wish to point out is this: that a *prima facie* case has been raised upon these proceedings for inquiry, because it

will be seen that the Act only contemplates petitions against one member, and against one member alone. For instance, section 12 provides,—

"It shall be lawful for any sitting member petitioned against, or for any electors petitioning and admitted parties to defend the election or return, to object to the sureties or any of them who shall have entered into such bond, on the ground of insufficiency, or that a surety is dead, or cannot be found from the want of a sufficient description in the bond, or that a person named in the bond has not duly executed the same."

Then, the 16th section provides,—

"It shall be competent to any petitioner, at any time after the presentation of the petition, to withdraw the same upon giving notice in writing under his hand, or under the hand of his agent, to the Speaker, and also to the sitting member."

Supposing he gives notice to one and not the other, what is to be the course of procedure? It is one petition, yet it is a joint act that the petition complains of; but suppose one person receives notice to attend, and the other does not, might not the evidence given against one, if sufficient for a conviction, convict indirectly the other also? I submit that such a state of things could not have been contemplated by the Legislature. Then section 17 says,—

"If, at any time after such election petition shall have been presented, the member petitioned against shall declare in writing to the Speaker that he will not defend his election or return (notice whereof shall be given by the Speaker in such manner as he shall deem best calculated to give full publicity to the same), it shall be lawful for any person having a right to vote at any election to which such petition shall relate, at any time within ten days after the publication of such notice, to petition the House to be permitted to defend such return or oppose the prayer of such petition, and such person shall thereupon be admitted to defend or oppose the same respectively."

It only refers to one member. Then clause 19 provides,—

"Whenever any election petition shall have been presented to the House, a day and hour shall be appointed by the House for the selection of a Committee to try the allegations therein contained; and notice thereof in writing shall be given by the Speaker to the petitioners and the sitting member, or to the person who may have been admitted to defend the return or oppose the prayer of the petition, or to their agents, accompanied by an order to attend the House at the time appointed."

Here, again, the Act refers to one member only. In England the case is different. In the Act 31 and 32 Vict. this difficulty was anticipated and properly provided against. Section 22 of that Statute provides for two or more candidates being made respondents. Then, in the Act of George III., Chap. XVI.—and I may say I think, but am not certain, the case to which my friend the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt) has referred must have come under that Act—we find it was obviously intended that

a petition might be against one or two or three members collectively; but, our Act does not contemplate anything of the sort, and therefore, I submit, a fair case has been established for inquiry. As to the question which the Premier referred to, involved in section 2 of the Amendment Act of 1862, that does not in any way preclude the parties from objecting to the petition. It is quite open to them to point out that the petition is bad, or that it is defective in some material respect, which alleged defect should be in the first instance considered by the House. The question in reference to the bond is also a serious difficulty. Subsection (2), section 3, of the Amendment Act of 1862 provides,—

“On the delivery of the petition as aforesaid to the Returning Officer or Resident Magistrate, the petitioners, or some or one of them, shall enter into a bond to the Queen, with a penalty of two hundred pounds, with two sureties in one hundred pounds each, to prosecute the petition in a *bond fide* manner at the next session of the General Assembly, and to pay all such costs and penalties as may be specified in this behalf in a resolution of the House of Representatives: such sureties to be approved of by such Returning Officer or Resident Magistrate.”

Now, the way in which that bond is enforced is this: After the proceedings are over, costs are awarded to the members; but the bond cannot be assigned partly to one and a portion to the other. But there can be no assignment absolutely to one person here—that is to say, supposing costs were awarded to Mr. Hurst to the extent of £200, and to Dr. Wallis to the extent of £300, how would the Speaker apportion the bond between the two parties? They have no joint interest. Mr. Hurst's costs of defending his seat against the petition may amount to several hundred pounds, and Dr. Wallis's costs may amount to the same: the bond could not be assigned to the extent of so much to one and so much to the other. The “*chōse in action*” cannot be apportioned, and must be assigned to some particular person. However, the security seems to be quite insufficient, and should be £800. There are other points which present themselves to one's mind; but the simple course would have been to have petitioned separately against each person, and then no difficulty would have arisen. Of course, there is the insuperable objection you have referred to, Sir, with reference to striking the Committee—a very important question, and one which cannot be got rid of in the way pointed out by the honorable member for Aron; and I certainly think the best course would be for the House to agree to the motion of the honorable member for Waitaki, so that the Committee, after careful consideration of all the Acts and cases bearing upon the point involved, might bring up to the House their recommendation, which could either be affirmed or rejected by the House. It is quite obvious that the reckless proposition suggested by the Government might be attended with very serious injustice to members of the House in future. I take it to be of the most vital importance that the procedure of the House should be so well settled that any per-

son will in future understand what course is to be followed. To compel these two gentlemen to elect whether they will have their cases tried together or not is to force upon them something which is improper and unfair. It is a serious matter for consideration whether—inasmuch as this petition really alleges a joint act of bribery and treating—it can be sustained by evidence. If this petition were referred to a Committee at once, they might come to the conclusion that we could not proceed any further. What is wanted is this, I apprehend: that all preliminary questions should be first disposed of by the House before it refers the petition to the Committee, so that the Committee may at once be in a position satisfactorily to dispose of all the other matters. I have mentioned already that there are a number of other difficult questions raised, and I hope honorable members will see that there is a *prima facie* case made out, which ought to be referred to this Committee, as suggested by the honorable member for Waitaki.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, the tendency of all modern legislation has been to take all such cases as this away from Parliament, and to relegate them to Courts of justice. I do not on the present occasion desire to express any opinion with regard to the wisdom of that course, for no doubt there is a good deal to be said on both sides. Believing that we shall follow what appears to be the well-established rule, I do not feel that the case under consideration is of that great importance it would possess if we were laying down precedents for the guidance of the future. I feel that the statements of the honorable and learned member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) are not very strong to gentlemen who have been many years in Parliament. The objections have been technical and legal, and, as such, do not weigh very heavily with the General Assembly. When the honorable member wishes to know what would be the position, supposing Dr. Wallis and Mr. Hurst were to elect to have separate Committees upon this one petition, and the Committees were to arrive at different findings, one Committee finding one gentleman guilty of bribery, and the other Committee acquitting the other gentleman, he apparently thinks he has reduced the matter to an absurdity; but, if a petition had been presented against each member, we should have been in exactly the same position. The same evidence would have had to be produced; yet the Committee might find one guilty, and acquit the other. That argument, therefore, has no weight at all. It is a mere technical difficulty which may present itself to the mind of the honorable gentleman, but which will have no weight in this House; and that such a thing does not have weight we have the experience of the English Parliament, where such petitions are invariably received and dealt with. Therefore I do not think much of that point. I take it that we want to do substantial justice as between all parties, and I myself would very much prefer, before we come to any final decision in the matter, that you, Sir, should have time to consult constitutional authorities, and suggest to the House what course it would be advisable to take—what would be a

Mr. Stewart

better mode of proceeding than the course we are now following. I may also point out that we cannot expect very satisfactory guidance from the Committee named by the honorable member for Waitaki: not that I in any way wish to express distrust in the judgment of those honorable gentlemen, but I would submit that, as four out of the Committee of seven have already in their places in this House told us that it is perfectly clear that the petition is irregular and cannot be received, they would come to its consideration with a foregone conclusion.

Mr. STEWART.—I said that there was a strong *prima facie* case of that nature, but that I had not had time to consider the matter carefully.

Major ATKINSON.—The honorable gentleman did guard himself at first, but he said subsequently that a double petition could not be presented. The honorable gentleman gave that as his decided opinion; but, of course, if he wishes to qualify that opinion he has a perfect right to do so. Then, Sir, we have three gentlemen who hold most decided and absolute opinions on the matter, and we have one who says he thinks there is a very strong *prima facie* case without his having gone carefully into it, but we have a very clear opinion as to what his leanings are. It is useless to refer the matter to such a Committee. If we are to decide it, we had better decide it by debate in this House; but I think that, if the House is not prepared to accept the amendment of the Minister of Lands, we should agree to the adjournment of the debate in order that we may have time to consider what the decision of the House should be. I should like to hear your opinion, Sir, after you have had time to consult constitutional authorities. I do not know whether the House will agree to that. There are many old members of the House whom I should like to hear express an opinion upon the subject. I should like to hear the views of the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) upon it. The question is not so important that we are bound to come to a decision at once, and I suggest that we should adjourn the debate, with a view to coming to a more satisfactory conclusion than we can come to at present.

Mr. SPEAKER.—In regard to the suggestion that I should consider the matter further, I may say at once that I have given the fullest consideration to it during the past ten days, and there seems such a hopeless difficulty in the way of appointing the Committee that I felt it my duty to inform the House of the fact. I see no way out of the difficulty; and, without wishing to prejudice the matter, I must say that I think the fault lies with the petitioner, who has put his petition into such a shape as to bring about these difficulties. If a separate petition in the case of each individual member had been presented, these difficulties would not have arisen. I must say that I cannot see that any advantage would result from referring the matter to me.

Major ATKINSON.—If that is your opinion, Sir, I will, with the permission of the House, withdraw my motion.

Sir G. GREY.—There being a petition against

myself, I must say that I felt a little alarmed at some of the remarks of the Colonial Treasurer. I understood him to say—which is the case—that in England these petitions are heard before the Judges of the country; and he went on to say that he would not commit himself to any opinion whether that was a desirable course or not, but that public opinion was in that direction, and that probably that would soon be the law here. He added that, that being the case, he did not object to these petitions being carelessly disposed of, because they would not form any precedent for the future. Now, if we are to be executed—

Major ATKINSON.—The honorable gentleman misunderstood me. If I said anything that conveyed that impression, I did not intend to do so.

Sir G. GREY.—That was what the honorable gentleman said. He may not have intended to say so, but that was the impression left on my mind, and on the minds of my friends who sit near me. Now, that is contrary to all principles of justice. The only thing that justifies the execution of a person convicted of any offence is that his punishment may be an example to others; and if the law is to be altered, and no example is to be made for future guidance, it is a curious thing that the honorable gentleman—

Major ATKINSON.—The honorable gentleman is not conforming to the rules of the House. I made an explanation, which I think the honorable gentleman ought to accept.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If an honorable member denies the use of language imputed to him, it is the duty of members to accept his denial.

Sir G. GREY.—There is another question involved. It is not what the honorable gentleman intended to convey. It is what his words did convey. I wish to set the mind of every honorable gentleman right upon the point.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman says he did not wish to convey the impression which has been attached to his words, and in that case his explanation ought to be accepted.

Major ATKINSON.—I have no objection to the honorable gentleman saying anything he likes.

Mr. BOWEN.—I must certainly beg to be excused from acting on the Committee, for the reason already stated—namely, that five out of the seven members nominated have expressed decided opinions upon the matter. It would be absolutely useless to expect that they would discuss the matter impartially; and I, for one, could not agree to go through the farce of sitting upon a Committee when five out of seven members—for I find that five members have already expressed decided opinions—have already made up their minds on the matter to be considered.

Mr. THOMSON.—We have been discussing this motion for an hour and a half, and I am inclined to think it would have been very much better if we had said a great deal less about it. All that was necessary was to make out a case, and I think that was done by the honorable member for Waitaki. He seemed to me to make out a very good case indeed, and other honorable members followed in the same direction, drawing

the attention of the House to many important points that had not been referred to by him. In fact, our legal friends have had what may be called a field day. We have had long extracts read from Statutes and other books, and it seems to me that it would be almost as well if our library were not so accessible. We almost required porters to bring in the great loads of books that have been used. I think a case for inquiry has been made out, and the sooner that case goes to the Committee the better.

Mr. HISLOP.—I understand the Colonial Treasurer has objected to the composition of the Committee on the ground that some members have expressed decided opinions upon the matter. So far as the Committee is concerned, I should have no objection to its being chosen by the Committee of Selection, by Mr. Speaker, or by anybody else. As to the expressions of opinion, I think it was incumbent upon me, before asking for the appointment of the Committee, to make out a sufficient case, and I endeavoured to do so, leaving myself, however, open to conviction if the arguments of the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt), or those supplied by the Hon. the Attorney-General, who has been busying himself, should show my suppositions to be wrong. I have not expressed such decided opinions as to lay myself open to the charge that I would act partially on the Committee. Of course I cannot speak for other honorable members, but I would ask the House, acting, as it is, in the nature of a Court, to be careful of its forms, so that there should be no loose execution of law, such as would be likely to take place if the amendment to my motion were adopted. That amendment would set up such a loose precedent that, with an unscrupulous Ministry on those benches, none of us would be safe from attacks from persons outside the House. I hope the House will prove superior to party feeling, and that we shall decide, once for all, whether those forms which ought to be adhered to shall be adhered to or not. I hope the gentlemen on the Government benches, at all events, will see their way to indorse the first part of the motion. As to the Committee, I am not particular how it is composed, so long as pronounced party men are excluded from it.

Mr. PITT.—I trust the course suggested by the honorable member for Waitaki will be followed. Having expressed an opinion upon the matter, I feel, like the honorable member for Kaiapoi, that I would rather not act on the Committee. I think it would be much better that the Committee should be nominated by the Committee of Selection or by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HALL.—The solution which has been suggested is perhaps the best one, that the honorable member for Waitaki should withdraw the names he has proposed, and that the appointment of the Committee should be left to the Selection Committee. If that is agreed to, I hope my honorable friend the Minister of Lands will withdraw his amendment. Will the honorable member for Waitaki agree to have the Committee appointed by the Committee of Selection?

Mr. HISLOP.—I have already said so.

Mr. Thomson

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Then I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Committee of Selection consists of the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Seymour), Mr. Brandon, Mr. Moss, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Hislop. I may observe that since the General Committee of Elections has been abolished the Selection Committee has been at times recently used at Home in matters of this kind. I presume the Committee of Selection will be unfettered as to the number of members of the Committee it appoints.

Motion, "That the Committee be appointed by the Selection Committee, four to be a quorum," agreed to.

CHRISTCHURCH CITY.

The House proceeded to the appointment of a Committee to try the allegations contained in the petition of the Hon. E. Richardson against the return of Sir G. Grey for the City of Christchurch, at three o'clock p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have received a letter from Mr. Travers intimating that the petitioner has appointed him his agent and counsel in the matter. I have also before me a list of the names of all members of the House, omitting the Speaker's name and the name of the Chairman of Committees. Now is the time for proposing the exemption of members from serving on the Committee.

Mr. HISLOP.—Before the question is put, I should like to ask your ruling, whether a stamp ought not to be affixed to the affidavit put in. I understand such a stamp is not affixed, and the law requires that any affidavit shall be stamped. It has been ruled over and over again that, until an affidavit or other document requiring a stamp has one affixed, it is incomplete. I would ask, therefore, whether that document has complied with the terms of the Act.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I could not take upon myself to decide that question off-hand. I should think that was a question which would come within the duties of the Committee.

Mr. HISLOP.—Should I be in order in moving that this document be referred to a Committee in the same way as the petition in the last case, to see whether the terms of the Act have been complied with?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think not.

Mr. HISLOP.—I presume the technical points should be complied with in this case as well as in the other.

Mr. HALL.—If that is the question, I think it ought to be decided by the House itself; but I would suggest that, unless there is a very clear case, we should not allow so large and important a question as that of who shall represent an important constituency in this House to turn upon a mere technicality. Surely we ought to take a broader view of such a question than that. Unless it is absolutely incumbent on us to admit highly-technical objections of this kind, I think we should decide the question on its merits.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS.—I am astonished that

the honorable member for Waitaki should give such an interpretation of the legality of an unstamped document. The want of a stamp does not affect its completeness. If it is not stamped now, it can be stamped for half-a-crown at any time within one month without any fine; up to three months on payment of a fine of 20 per cent. in addition, which, in this case, would be 6d.

Mr. MOORHOUSE.—It would be degrading to the House if it were to entertain for a moment the objection raised by the honorable member for Waitaki. Stamp duties were never intended to operate upon this House. They were intended to operate upon our commercial system, for revenue purposes. This House is brought together for the purpose of projecting the ways and means necessary for carrying on the public service; and I think it is not at all within the spirit of our Constitution that we should require complaints brought before the House to have a half-crown stamp attached to them, and the absence of such a stamp should not be a bar to justice being done by us.

Mr. WHITAKER.—The honorable member for Waitaki recommended me a short time ago to read the Standing Orders; and I would now recommend the honorable gentleman to read the Stamp Act. It was stated by the honorable gentleman, and by the honorable member for Eden, that a document requiring a stamp is not complete until the stamp is attached; but every lawyer knows that is not true. The document is perfectly valid, but cannot be received as evidence in a Court of law—that is all. And then, there is a complete answer to the honorable gentleman's objection in the 5th section of the Election Petitions Act, which says that every Election Petitions Committee is to be guided "by justice and good conscience, without regard to legal forms and solemnities."

Mr. MACANDREW.—Has it not been the practice hitherto that the names of Ministers should be struck off the list?

Mr. SPEAKER.—In the cases which occurred in 1876 the members of the Executive were exempted.

Mr. BOWEN.—I think it was not the case in 1871.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is for the House to say whether they are to be exempted or not.

Mr. HALL.—Ministers think that parties are so evenly balanced in the House at present that it would not be wise to disturb that balance by refusing to act on this Committee.

Mr. BOWEN.—I will move, That the representatives of the Native race in this House be exempted. I find, on looking into precedents, that they have been exempted on previous occasions. They are returned to this House under a different law from the European representatives, and therefore cannot be expected to have made themselves thoroughly acquainted with our system of representation.

Mr. GIBBORNE.—I protest against such a doctrine as that. Ministers say that parties are so evenly balanced in the House that their names cannot be taken off the list; and yet it is pro-

posed to strike off the names of the Maori members. I certainly do not think their names should be struck off. It has been sought to bring them under the Disqualification Act, and I do not see that they can be deprived of any privileges we ourselves possess. I say that by the law the Maori members are entitled to sit on this Committee, and I think the majority of the House will sustain their rights in that respect.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—There is a better reason why their names should not be struck off the list. We take our share in determining whether they are qualified to sit here or not. I should not object to their names being struck off this list if we allow them to settle their petitions regarding their own elections themselves.

Mr. BOWEN.—I do not wish to press the motion. I acted strictly on precedent. I looked into the matter, and the late Native Minister will bear me out in saying that the same thing has been done on previous occasions. The only reason why I proposed the exemption was because it has been the custom to exempt those honorable gentlemen. However, in the present state of party feeling, when it appears no question can be discussed without a violent exhibition of that feeling, I think it is better to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I beg to move, That the members of the Executive be exempted from sitting on the Committee. There is no doubt, from the way in which the honorable member at the head of the Government spoke of the balance of parties, that he would only be a strong partisan in the inquiry.

Mr. MOORHOUSE.—It appears to me that, according to all modern rules, it is quite impossible to eliminate any members of this House from the privileges and rights that belong to them. I am inclined to think, along with the late Native Minister, that we should insist that every honorable member of this House, except those exempt by law, should serve on these Committees.

Mr. HALL.—The law prescribes the particular manner in which this Committee shall be struck. The honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Shrimski) proposes to act contrary to that, and to declare that the law is to be disregarded.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—It has been disregarded before, I believe.

Mr. READER WOOD.—I think in this matter we ought to abide by the letter of the law laid down for us. If one member is to get up and move a resolution that the Maori members shall be exempt, and another that Ministers shall be exempt, from serving on these Committees, the simplest plan is for one member on my side of the House to move that all members on the opposite side of the House shall be exempt, and then for a member on the Government side of the House to get up and propose that all members on my side shall be exempt; and then we shall settle the difficulty. I think we should adhere to the law in this matter, and we shall make a great mistake if we attempt to supplement the law by resolution of this House.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think clause 20 of the Election Petitions Act gives power to the House to do what is proposed by the honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Shrimski). That clause is as follows:—

"At the time appointed, the Speaker shall cause to be made out a list containing the names of all the members of the House, excepting only those of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees, and such members as have obtained leave of absence, or are not available for service on the Committee through illness or absence, or from such other cause as the House, on the question being referred to them by the Speaker, shall determine to be sufficient excuse for not serving on the Committee."

The latter part of that clause leaves it entirely to the House to say who shall serve and who shall not serve on the Committee. If we think there is sufficient cause shown by the mover of the resolution why Ministers should be exempt, it would be for us to take action. When we see that the Ministry does not command the confidence of a majority of the House, it is sufficient cause to exempt them from this Committee. Under these circumstances, the motion of the honorable member for Waitaki would be an indirect vote of want of confidence. We are not allowed to bring on our grievances, and I think this will be a very good opportunity for bringing on the motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers.

Mr. HALL.—I submit that the honorable gentleman is not really discussing the question before the House. The question before the House now is not a vote of want of confidence.

Mr. SPEAKER was understood to say the honorable member was not out of order in speaking to the question of exempting Ministers.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am very glad to hear your ruling, Sir. I think the words of the Act are very specific—"or such other course as the House may determine." I say the case is this: As far as the House is concerned, if Ministers have lost the confidence of the House in one respect, they have lost our confidence in every respect.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I allowed the honorable member on the previous occasion to go on, thinking that he was speaking in a jocular manner; but I must say that I think he is now a little out of order in his present remarks.

Mr. SEDDON.—Seriously speaking, I think we ought to be very careful in using our prerogative in these cases; and I think the majority of the House at all times should unite in determining as to the proceedings. We have been placed in our present position owing to the action of the Government: under these circumstances, I think the motion of the honorable member for Waitaki is quite in accordance with the wishes of a majority of the House.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I am very sorry that, having mooted this question, it should have led to this discussion. I thought there was some reason for this exemption; but it seems there is no reason whatever, and I would strongly urge the honorable member for Waitaki to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Shrimski's motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Reader Wood

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is customary for the person petitioned against to be omitted from the list. Therefore, with the consent of the House, I will now omit Sir George Grey's name. It is now my duty to furnish the two parties—the petitioner and the member petitioned against—with a list of the members, showing omissions: the omissions being the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, and the member petitioned against (Sir G. Grey). The parties will each then nominate a member to serve on the Committee.

Mr. TOLE.—Do I understand that this petition is not to be referred to the same Committee as the other petition?

Mr. SPEAKER.—No; it is not to be referred to that Committee.

Mr. TOLE.—Should I be in order in moving that the petition be discharged?

Mr. SPEAKER.—No.

Mr. TOLE.—May I draw your attention, Sir, to page 602—

Mr. SPEAKER.—No business can go on in the absence of the Clerk, who is communicating the list to the petitioner's agent.

The Clerk having returned,

Mr. SPEAKER said,—"I have to inform the House, on behalf of Mr. Richardson, that Mr. William Sefton Moorhouse has been named as his committeeman. I now call upon Sir George Grey to name the member he desires to represent him on the Committee."

Sir G. GREY.—I name the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart).

Mr. SPEAKER.—I now appoint Mr. Fulton as the Chairman of this Committee; and I name to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock, in my room, as the time and place for striking the Committee.

PAPAKURA TELEGRAPH AND POST OFFICE.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Government, Whether they will have a telegraph and post and money-order office opened at Papakura? He might state that Papakura was the principal town of the county. It was also the principal polling-place for the electoral district, and was within the centre of a very large population. At present the post office was conducted in a store, and the people in the neighbourhood were very anxious that a telegraph and money-order office should be established there in connection with the post office.

Mr. HALL replied that the Government were not at present able to give a positive answer, but inquiry would be made.

PUKEKOHE COURTHOUSE.

Major HARRIS asked the Minister of Justice, If he will cause a sum of money to be placed on the estimates for the erection of a Courthouse at Pukekohe? The district for which he asked for this Courthouse was very large and populous: Pukekohe was the centre of a large and thickly-populated district. At the present time, persons wishing to have a little law on their own account had to travel eleven miles. If a Courthouse were established in the place mentioned, there would

be no necessity for travelling so far in order to indulge in the luxury of law.

Mr. ROLLESTON said that at the present time the Government had received no information on the subject. He would make inquiries, but as yet no reason had been shown for erecting this Courthouse.

CLIVE ELECTION.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Native Minister, Whether the colony has been charged with the cost incurred in conveying the late Native Minister, Mr. Sheehan, from Auckland to Napier, to enable him to contest the Clive election, after he was returned for the Thames; and, if so, what were the items charged, and what was the total cost? He had been requested to ask this question.

Mr. HALL said that, in the absence of the Native Minister, he had been asked by him to give the answer, which was as follows: "Ministers when travelling are allowed expenses, and Mr. Sheehan, I presume, drew his on the occasion referred to in the usual way. But the question appears to refer to special or extra expenses, and no such expenditure seems to have been charged against the colony on the occasion referred to. A voucher for £40 was sent for payment to the Government; but, on this being submitted to Mr. Sheehan, he said that the amount would be paid by himself, as the expense was partly incurred in connection with the Clive election contest, in which he was a candidate."

Mr. SHEEHAN might state that there were other charges which he was entitled to make, but did not, lest there should be any question raised. They amounted to a sum of £40.

Mr. JOHNSTON wished to say that he was exceedingly glad to hear the answer given to the question by the Hon. the Premier.

INANGAHUA SHEEP INSPECTOR.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE asked the Government, On whose recommendation Mr. Gallagher was appointed Sheep Inspector for the Inangahua District, the number of sheep in the district, and the amount of salary paid; also the date of the appointment?

Mr. HALL replied that Mr. John Gallagher was appointed Sheep Inspector in the Buller and Grey subdivision of the Nelson Sheep District on the 1st March, 1879, at a salary of £200 a year, to include all travelling expenses within the Nelson District. Mr. Gallagher applied for the appointment himself, and his application was supported by the Chief Inspector of Sheep for the district. A deputation—Mr. Reeves and Mr. Shephard—who waited on the Colonial Secretary on matters relating to Nelson, were consulted as to the propriety of appointing an Inspector for this subdivision, and they concurred in recommending Mr. Gallagher. There were 3,948 sheep in the Buller and Grey subdivision, owned by fifty-three residents in the subdivision.

Mr. SHEPHARD had heard his name mentioned as having recommended the appointment of Mr. Gallagher. That was an entire mistake. He did not know the gentleman who was ap-

pointed Sheep Inspector, and had nothing to do with recommending his appointment, and his name ought not to be connected with it in any way.

Mr. REEVES had certainly recommended Mr. Gallagher for the appointment, as he believed him to be a most fitting person for the position. He would point out that, although there were but 3,948 sheep in the Buller and Grey District, there came every year, from the Amuri District, from Nelson, Canterbury, and Wanganui, some 12,000 or 15,000 sheep; and it was also for the purpose of looking after those sheep coming that the Inspector was appointed.

NELSON WASTE LANDS.

Mr. J. B. FISHER asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government propose to make any, and, if any, what, provision for the more expeditious dealing with applications to acquire waste lands in the West Coast portion of the Nelson Land District, for affording increased facilities for settlement of the lands by agriculturists, and for providing for a more local administration? He might inform the Government that for the last nine or ten years the difficulties in the way of obtaining land in the district he at present represented had been enormous. He knew a number of cases in which persons had applied for land, had paid a deposit on application, and whose applications were favourably received and recommended; and yet, although a considerable time had elapsed, they had been unable to obtain a title or lease of any kind. He knew of one case in particular where a *bona fide* settler had, ten years ago, applied for a lease of a piece of land. He paid the required deposit, and was promised a lease. Although he had written repeatedly to the Land Office of the district for his title, he had been unable to get a scrap of paper or title, or any information whatever as to when he would receive it. He had expended a good deal of money in improving the property and fencing it in, and yet he was unable to get a title to it, or any answer whatever, from the Nelson Waste Lands Board. There were a number of other cases of a similar kind. He might state that there were a number of reserves in that district, and he would be glad if the Government would give their attention to the question of throwing open these lands for competition by *bona fide* settlers. Scores of men had been hanging about the town for weeks and months, in the expectation of being able to obtain land; but they had gone away disappointed, carrying their money with them.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Government was aware that there had been considerable inconvenience in the past in the matter referred to by the honorable gentleman. It was now intended to make the Wardens District Land Officers. They would receive applications for land, and furnish information from maps and otherwise. The sales of land would be held at the place most convenient to the land to be sold. It was hoped that these arrangements would meet all the circumstances of the case.

Mr. J. B. FISHER said the remedy proposed

would not cure the evil. What was wanted was a more expeditious and less roundabout way of acquiring land. The remedy proposed by the Government would only introduce another office between the people and the land, and increase the red-tapism, formalism, and delay in acquiring the land.

PAUATAHANUI TELEGRAPH STATION.

Mr. BRANDON asked the Government, If they will establish a telegraph station at Pauatahanui? He might say that this was a very important district, and a telegraph station would be a great public convenience. He hoped the Government would be able to see their way to establish the station. There was a Government reserve there which might be used for the purpose.

Mr. HALL was afraid the Government could not see their way to establish a regular telegraph station at the place mentioned. It might be possible to establish a lineman's station. The Government were making inquiries on the subject, and would be glad if they could see their way to erect a lineman's station.

NATIVE STATEMENT.

Mr. BRYCE.—Sir, in rising to make the Native Statement to the House, I wish to say that it is my desire that the very fullest opportunity should be afforded for debating the questions in connection with Native affairs; and, in order that the late Native Minister may follow, and that any other member may take part in the discussion, I shall move, if you say it can be done, Sir, that the House do adjourn. I think the honorable members on the opposite side of the House will be prepared to give me credit for being a silent member—a member who is not in the habit of taking up very much of the time of the House unnecessarily. That being so, and as it really does require a very strong impulse to get me on my legs, I should like to ask the indulgence of the House while I say one or two words with regard to our position on these benches, before proceeding to make any Statement on Native Affairs. I shall only say two or three words, and will not occupy more than two or three minutes in doing so, upon the position of the Government from my point of view. I ask the opportunity of doing this, because I do not think it at all likely that I shall take part in the debate which is supposed to be pending. Now, I claim to believe that the Government occupy their position upon on these benches by fair means. I claim to believe that we have been put here fairly by a majority of the House.—(No, no.)—An honorable member says “No, no,” and he doubtless means that we have got here unfairly, because, as has been said, we have got here under false pretences. I say, Sir, we have come here under no false pretences. The honorable member who lately held the position I now occupy announced from this bench, while the no-confidence debate was pending, that no coalition would be possible—that no member from that side of the House would join my honorable colleague the Premier in forming a Ministry, and that he would have to draw from

his own friends alone. Nay, more, the honorable member who is now the leader of the Opposition stood up where I am standing now, and gave what was virtually a notice that he would move a vote of want of confidence in the Government; and, in view of these facts, and in view of the fact that no coalition was possible, and that Mr. Hall would have to form a Government from his own party, honorable members gave their votes. It is an unfair mode of argument to say that we are here under false pretences. It is said now, indeed, on the part of the Opposition, that they hold a majority. So be it. I am not going to argue the question with them. Even if they say they have a majority of twenty I will not deny it. If they go further, however, and say that the majority of the people do not desire to give this Government a fair opportunity of placing their measures before the country, I will dispute that assertion. I will ask them to concede this: that we have a large number of supporters, who represent a considerable section of the country; and I do say that it is our duty, seeing that our sincerity has been challenged, to prove that sincerity beyond all question. It is our duty to ourselves; it is our duty to the gentlemen who support us in this House, and to that section of the country which they represent; in fact, it is our duty to the whole country to do so—a duty which, in my opinion, we cannot evade without dishonor. Now, Sir, I will say no more upon that point, and I am obliged to the House for its toleration in allowing me to say so much. I will now proceed to the subject proper of my Statement. A high constitutional authority in this House—the honorable member for Parnell—stated a constitutional doctrine in the House a little while ago, to which I will allude for a moment if I am not ruled out of order in making reference to a previous debate. The doctrine which he laid down at that time was this: that it was no part of the duty of an incoming Ministry to traduce the character of the preceding Ministry—that it was no part of our duty to traduce and slander our predecessors, to point out their little sins, or to pick holes in their coats. I most entirely agree with that constitutional doctrine. I never had a doubt about it. I believed in the doctrine long before the honorable member for Parnell instructed the House in it. Sir, it has amused me to some considerable extent to see—what shall I say?—the alarm, almost the panic, with which some honorable members seem to regard what an honorable member has been pleased to call the “detective Ministry.” They seem to think that some dreadful disclosures will be made. Sir, we have high authority for saying that “The wicked flee when no man pursueth.” I am not going so far as to say on the present occasion that there are any wicked in the case, or that any one is flying; but I do say this: that there is no pursuit, at any rate, in the direction which seems to be so much feared. Sir, when I understood that I had to make a Statement of this nature to the House, I determined at first to prepare a lot of tables, and to place them before the House as well as I was able; but I

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changed my mind. I have prepared a few tables, however, which I intend to lay before the House before I resume my seat. I thought it was much more important that I should try to place before the House the mode in which each particular department has been administered under the system of personal government which obtains in the Native Department than that I should deal largely with tables, which, perhaps, the House would not understand whilst I uttered them, and would scarcely look at when printed. I have noticed that some publishers at Home have a peculiar way of bringing certain publications before the public. If they wish to bring a book prominently into public notice they will tell you how it is bound, the number of pages it contains, and so on; and when they are particularly anxious to bring the book before the public they adopt the plan of holding up a specimen-page in order to give people a vivid idea of what the book is like. I shall on this occasion take a lesson from the publishers, and when I have to comment upon any particular mode of managing the business in this department I shall give a few cases in illustration—in fact, I shall hold up a specimen-page. There is only one objection which I can see to this course. But it is an objection which I hope to be able to obviate. I can easily see, when I do hold up a specimen-page, it may be imputed to me that I am doing so in personal disparagement of my predecessor in office. I can only disclaim at the outset any such intention. If that honorable gentleman should have any doubts on the subject, I hope he will remember my disclaimer, and give me the benefit of it. I do not intend any personal disparagement to him. Now, Sir, I think I am right in assuming that a great many members of this House—I ought to say most members of this House—desire to see a great change effected in this department. I think I am right in saying that they desire to see the personal government of the Native Minister in this department done away with to a very large extent—that is to say, almost completely. But, whether that is so or not with regard to the whole of the members of this House, I am perfectly certain that it is so in the country. I do believe that from one end of the colony to the other there is a strong desire that this department, so far as personal government is concerned, should be done away with. I believe that that is the wish of the country, and I must say that I entirely concur with the country. Sir, this is no new story with me. I have felt this, and believed very much the same as I believe now, for many years past. I can remember very well the good old days—the old days, at all events—when personal government was in its full glory. But I know—at least, I am much mistaken if in the latter days of Sir Donald McLean's life he did not come to the conclusion that it was necessary to curtail this personal mode of government. Circumstances were changed. For instance, a very small amount of expenditure at one time went a long way with the Maoris. But now it is very different. At one time a great deal was to be done with a little sugar, a little flour, and some blankets; but now, Sir, the

Maoris know very well how to ask, and, instead of demanding a bag of flour, a bag of sugar, or two or three blankets, they are not afraid to ask even so much as a million of money. That would be one reason, if there were no other, why I think, although it could be justified in a certain sense at one time, it cannot be justified now. I think that, for some years before the death of the gentleman to whom I have referred, he was doing his utmost—I do not say that he succeeded fully, or to any large extent, but he was doing his utmost—to reduce the management of the department to such a system that his personal interference in every matter would be less and less necessary. But he did, I believe, succeed to some extent; and I ask any one in this House whether during the last two years—I am sure every one must have remarked it—this personal management of the department has not been raised to almost all its former glory. The two great Native experts of the House—the two greatest Native experts in the colony, indeed—have been exerting themselves for the last two years among the Maoris to the utmost for the purpose of restoring the old system; but I do not think that the result is anything in favour of a personal mode of government. It is notorious that this personal government has grown to an extent which makes it almost unbearable. Why, the honorable member who preceded me in this office could scarcely move about the streets of Wellington, and could not go about the country, without being fairly besieged by Natives waiting upon him. They regarded him, apparently, as a sort of providence; and I am sure that, if he were to be put in the witness-box and examined upon the subject, he would say that that sort of thing was going on to such an extent as to seriously interfere with the ordinary working of the department. That was not all. He was not only waited upon and besieged in this manner personally, but waited upon through the post office and through the telegraph station. I believe it has been no unfrequent thing on his part—I do not know whether he told me so himself, but at any rate I have had it upon very good authority—to receive something like a hundred and fifty telegrams in a single day. Of course a great number of these telegrams were connected in some way or another with money, or what our friend Mr. Chadband would call “the corn, the wine, and the oil”—money, or money's worth. I promised, when I began, to submit a specimen-page occasionally, and I will now do so by reading a telegram addressed to the honorable gentleman, omitting names, which is a very fair specimen of a class of which the honorable gentleman must have received a great many. This is the telegram:—

“Friend, do not be vexed at the number of my wires and words to you. They are addressed to you as the redresser of the grievances of all the people; hence I seek such relief at your hands. Friend, do not be annoyed at the multiplicity of my requests. Do you consent to my request for £2,000, so that I may settle with —.”

I may say here, by way of parenthesis, that this £2,000 was given to him; but I shall have to refer to that more particularly directly, and will

pass over it for the present. The telegram proceeds, "Friend, I am your true servant. Consider my prayer. The money will not be merely given: the Government will hereafter obtain what they desire." This is the sort of telegram of which I am sure the honorable member must have received a great number. Possibly, for anything I know, there may have been a hundred such out of the one hundred and fifty received by the honorable gentleman in the course of a single day. What I want to point out in connection with this is, that this sudden vigour which has been infused into the personal management of the Natives does not by any means point to the abolition or abatement of the Native Department, but has a tendency exactly in the opposite direction. Personal government by the Native Minister means personal expenditure by the Native Minister. To see that, we have only to glance at the sums the Native Minister has at his disposal—sums voted by this House, but the control of which, so far as the manner of spending it is concerned, has passed absolutely away from this House. In going over these sums, and putting them together, although I had a little knowledge on the subject previously, I have been perfectly astonished at the amount of money the Native Minister could distribute unknown to the House. I do not know whether the House will be surprised or not. When my honorable friend the Colonial Treasurer made his Statement the other night, and laid bare some financial matters, members opposite said, "Oh! we knew all this before." And I may be told, as to what I am going to point out, that honorable members are aware of such things already, and do not disapprove of them. Well, I know this: that there are honorable members opposite who, a few years ago, did disapprove of such transactions. Sir, times have changed, and men may have changed with them; and that puts me in mind of an old rhyme current in the English Parliament some years ago, which ran something like this:—

No more they make a fiddle-faddle
About a Hessian horse or saddle,
A million and a vote of credit;
'Tis right—he can't be wrong who did it.

I do not know, as I say, whether this personal government of which I am going to speak is approved by the House or not. It may be; and, of course, any gentleman who can smooth over or put a gloss upon what the Colonial Treasurer said the other night with respect to the finances of the colony will have no difficulty, I apprehend, in painting transactions connected with the Native Department in the colour of the rose. I want to give honorable members an idea of the various sums that are solely within the control of the Native Minister. I may explain here, again, in case I did not make myself sufficiently clear before, that I am speaking of the office of Native Minister, and not of the Hon. John Sheehan personally. I am speaking of the department as it might be conducted by any one under the system of personal government. There are a good many sums within the control of the Native Minister. For instance, last year, 1878–79, there was a sum voted for roads in Native districts,

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£20,000. Now, of course that amount properly comes within the Public Works Department; but there is this peculiarity about the matter, that the Public Works Department absolutely accepts the recommendation of the Native Minister as to how that money should be spent. I am not aware of a single refusal of the recommendation of the Native Minister as to how the money should be spent and dealt with. And I wish further to point out that the Native Minister himself cannot possibly have that knowledge of the various works that are required to be executed under this vote. He has no competent staff of officials to fall back upon, from whom he might receive what I may call responsible advice, and he has actually to ask advice of the people who solicit him for that expenditure. It has so happened that people have come to him and asked him if he did not think such-and-such an expenditure would be a good thing, and he has had to take their advice and their opinion as to the propriety of the expenditure, and in some cases, I know, has relied upon such opinions. Of course it is utterly impossible that the Native Minister can be acquainted with the works for which he authorizes this expenditure. There is another item which was passed in 1878–79 that deserves notice: a sum of £15,000 was voted for opening up Native lands; and, as it is of so kindred a character to the other vote, I have no doubt it has practically been regarded as part of the other vote: at any rate, it is also within the control of the Native Minister, and his recommendations as to the expenditure are taken by the Public Works Department absolutely without demur. And I may just state that it was proposed by the late Ministry, according to the estimates I have gone through, to increase these items during the current year to £50,000—that is, £25,000 each. I call the attention of the House to the fact that a good deal of this expenditure is passed over to local bodies. There are a good many small items, such as 7s. 6d., 10s., and so forth; but there are a number of larger items to which I shall call special attention presently. I hold in my hand a detailed return of the expenditure under these heads, and I find that, although the return is to a large extent of sums such as I have mentioned—7s. 6d., 14s. 8d., £2 4s., £13 6s.—there are some of considerable magnitude. I see one of the first items in the return is, "Main roads in Thames County, £24,450."

Mr. MACANDREW.—Patea County?

Mr. BRYCE.—I shall have occasion to refer to the county again. I shall have to repeat the name several times; so the honorable gentleman will be sure to remember it. A similar item occurs in reference to a neighbouring county, the County of Coromandel; and there was also an expenditure of £465 in an adjoining county—I forget the name, and the amount was so small that I did not think it worth while to make a note of it. The sum expended from the vote for roads in Native districts in the County of Coromandel was £1,400. That is only a small sum; but to the Thames County there has been paid from the same vote—that is, for roads in Native districts—the sum I have

already referred to—namely, £4,450. A little further down, I see another sum of £500 for the Thames County; further down still is another sum for the same Thames County—I hope the honorable gentleman has caught the name by this time—of £4,000. Proceeding onwards, I find another item, “Thames County roads, £500,” and another small item of £50 for work which I am not sure is in the county. But I notice also that there are liabilities for the same county—absolute liabilities, inasmuch as everything is in writing and in proper form—there are liabilities of this kind to the extent of £2,600. That makes a total—not within the last year exactly, because these liabilities extend outside the year 1878–79—of £12,050 for the Thames County. I ought to mention that a sum of £500 was paid over to the Thames Borough Council; but that is a small sum, hardly worth mentioning. I am not sure whether this county can fairly be called a Native district—I understand that it is to some extent a gold fields district; but what I wish to say is this: that it is impossible that the Native Minister can understand of his own knowledge the particular necessity for these special grants for these special purposes, and he is precluded, by the system which the management of this department has fallen into, from taking the advice of responsible officers. He has to take the advice of the persons who are soliciting the money. Now, I ask whether this is a desirable sort of thing. I am referring to these things mainly for the purpose of showing that the expenditure of a very large sum of money has passed away most effectually—as effectually as it is possible to pass away—from the control of this House. Of course the House votes the money in a lump sum; but it has no control whatever over the departmental distribution of the amount. I will now go through the expenditure of the department, and show that these items are in the same category—that is to say, that they are dependent upon the will of the Native Minister. There are in this colony Native pensioners to the number of 157, who receive an average pension of £36 each; there are also 81 assessors, who are mixed up to some extent with the pensioners, and the average annual salary of each of these assessors is £43 15s.: the total of these two sums is £9,211. There are 81 Native policemen who receive an annual average salary of £16, which gives a total of £1,313; the three items together—for pensioners, assessors, and policemen—making a grand total of £10,524. Now, I would point out to the House that these pensioners, assessors, and policemen are dependent upon the personal supervision—may I call it?—of the Native Minister. Although the pensioners are provided for by law under the Civil List Act, yet they have been changed about at the will of the Native Minister—that is to say, he can remove one man and put another in, and so on; and it is the same with the assessors. And I would call the attention of the House to the fact that this is a thing that is growing. When Native members are returned to this House they very naturally make requests for the appointment of

pensioners, assessors, and policemen; and, so long as the government of this department is continuously dependent upon the personal influence of the Native Minister with the Maoris, such requests cannot be resisted. I do not care who he is—if a man wishes to retain his influence with the Maoris he must yield, as a matter of necessity, to such requests. But I put it to the House whether it is desirable that this system should continue. I have shown that in these respects the Native Minister has a great deal of power in the distribution of the money voted by this House—a power which no other Minister of the Crown can aspire to. But the expenditure is by no means confined to the cases I have given. I will now produce another specimen-page or two to show how expenditure spreads itself in other directions. For example, a Native chief enters an action against a European; the case comes on for trial; he retains counsel, takes advice, brings his witnesses to Court, and so on. All this, of course, is very expensive. The case goes against him. A new trial is ordered, and the same thing goes on again. Witnesses have to be brought from a distance; lawyers have to be paid; the case goes to trial once more, and again goes against him. And the bills for all this are sent in to the Government, and would have been paid if it had not been that the payment would have disqualified a member of this House. Again, Sir, a chief has the misfortune to lose his wife, and he thinks it necessary to have a grand funeral. The funeral expenses amount to something like £300, and he is pressed for the money. He applies, as a matter of course, to the Government for the money. The Government advance it, taking—I do not know whether honorable members will be surprised at it—taking a promissory note for the amount. And, curiously enough, there is no due date stated on the face of the document for the repayment of the money. However, that is how the thing was done. The money was advanced, and the promissory note is now lying at the Government offices. Well, Sir, these things are apt to grow upon the Native Minister. I believe myself that, if I were only a year or so in office, I should come to view these things as many other people view them. Very likely I should excel in this direction. I have not tried it, and I might make a grand hand at it. But this kind of expenditure goes even a little further; and I will give the House some information in reference to the telegram which I read from a Native chief for a loan of £2,000. You have heard me read the telegram, to the effect that £2,000 was urgently required. Well, he got that £2,000. I will tell the House how he got it; and the circumstance will show—I was going to say the demoralizing effect, but that would be too strong a word; but it will show the tendency of this personal government. Of course when these requests are made, they have to be granted, and exceptional means have to be adopted for granting them. The method adopted in this instance was this: The Native Minister directed a banker in the neighbourhood where the Maori lived to make the advance to the Go-

vernment agent—a European agent, be it understood—of £2,000, and then he directed the Government agent to transfer the £2,000 to the Native who wanted it. That was the process that was adopted; and I would point out that this is another item that cannot be under the control of the House, because it was never voted by the House. When I have got used to the position I shall very likely do this kind of thing myself; but at present I am bound to say that this appears to be—well, what shall I call it? To put it in plain words, I think the Native Minister had no more right to do that than any private member of this House. That is my view of the case. I say that these things are the result of the personal government and the personal management of the Native Department. I ought to say that the Native chief repaid £1,000 out of the £2,000. The remainder now stands due at the bank, and I may say that the bank is now pressing the Government to pay the money in order to square up the half-yearly account; so that half the amount has been paid, and interest has to be paid on the other half. In this connection, and in order to show the growing danger of this personal government, I will give another case. It is a case that has excited some little sympathy in me, because I can see that it may grow to large dimensions, and may be an injury to the men I am going to speak about, and to others of like kind. A number of Native chiefs have sent their sons to school, and have given them in some cases a very good education. Now, that is a very laudable thing; but, though these lads have received a very good education, they probably are not as well educated as their parents suppose they are, and in some cases the parents have sent those lads down to Wellington with a request that they should be taken into the Civil Service. I say, if the government of the department is to be dependent on the personal influence of the Minister, that is a request which can scarcely be resisted. The Natives will say to us, "You have told us it is a laudable thing to send our sons to school. We have done so—we have got them educated; and you won't find them employment." Five lads were sent down to Wellington in this way, as I say; but there is no suitable employment for them. I believe they are honest, industrious, well-behaved boys, and it is a great pity that no employment can be found for them. There is no work in the department to give them. Two are employed in the Printing Office, and another is employed in some odd jobs; but, speaking broadly, these lads are going about Wellington idle, at a cost to the colony of £700 a year. The cost is not of much importance. The important point is, that these lads will suffer injury themselves from being idle and likely to pick up bad companions. Moreover, it is quite possible that the number of such lads may grow from five to fifty. If the personal system of management is continued it will be almost impossible to send these boys back to their parents. It would be a dangerous thing, and one which I think no Native Minister would care to do. That, I think, goes, as far as any instance

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I have given, to show the great and growing danger to the country of the personal mode of government in these Native matters. Sir, I have been trying to give the House a general idea of how the work of this department gets on under the personal system of government. I do not know whether I have succeeded so far; but I shall now quote a few figures for the purpose of making my Statement as useful as possible for reference. I stated at the commencement that I would not indulge in figures, but I am afraid some few are necessary. I have a return here of the actual expenditure of the Native Department for the year 1878-79, and also below it a return of the expenditure for the succeeding three months. I will take the year first: For the Civil list, £7,000 was appropriated, and £7,000 expended. That is done under an Act. It was insisted upon in the colony years ago that a certain amount of expenditure on Native matters should take place, and that amount was fixed at £7,000. That accounts for the amount appropriated and the amount expended being the same. For salaries and contingencies the amount appropriated was £17,112, and the amount expended £21,676. As a matter of justice to the department, it is right to say that this discrepancy has not arisen from extravagance in the department. It has arisen from an item called "Contingencies," to which, presently, I shall have to make further allusion. For "Native Schools" the amount appropriated was £14,540, and the amount expended £13,707. I shall have to refer to that item also presently. It is some satisfaction to say that it is passing away from the control of the department altogether, and therefore I need not say much upon the subject. For "Land Frauds Prevention" the amount appropriated was £437 10s., and the amount expended was £417 13s. 10d. That expenditure is also under Act. For the percentage on "Land Sales in the Wairarapa," at 5 per cent., £150 was voted, and £131 19s. 7d. expended. For the Native Land Court the amount appropriated was £8,071, and the amount expended £9,564, showing an excess of £1,493. The total amount appropriated for these services was £47,311, and the total expenditure £52,498. With respect to the item, "Roads in Native Districts," the amount appropriated was £20,000, and the amount expended £16,146. Then there is another item, which is under a different section of the department—the Land Purchase Department—"Roads to open up Lands purchased by the Government from the Natives," for which £15,000 was voted, and £500 expended. But during the succeeding quarter these figures assumed a different aspect, and both these items for roads in Native districts have, during the three months, been about exhausted. In saying they are nearly exhausted, I must explain that I have included certain liabilities, amounting to a considerable sum, and I admit that it is an open question whether they should be included or not. I said I should make further allusion to "Contingencies," because it is owing to that item that the excess in expenditure has taken place. I suppose honorable members will scarcely be surprised to hear that the sum voted for contin-

gencies has been exceeded. The amount voted for the year 1878-79 for "Contingencies" was £2,100, and, taking the proportion—£500—for the next quarter, the total amount for the fifteen months would be £2,600. The expenditure has been £18,599. I ought to observe that there are in this certain liabilities which have not been paid, but which I am certain should be included in the same period, because they consist of vouchers held back for some reason or another, but which, under ordinary circumstances, should have been paid during the period. Therefore I think those liabilities are fairly included, and they show an excess of expenditure over appropriation under this head for the fifteen months of £16,000. I should, however, observe that there is an item of £800 included which it may be fair to deduct from this amount, because it is for railway fares, and it may be argued that it ought not to appear. But, even supposing that were taken off, the excess of expenditure under this head would be £15,200. And I may go on to say that these are really not all the contingencies, for there are many other items which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been placed under that heading, and which I presume would have been placed under it, if the sum had not been so large. In the Statement, so far, I have purposely avoided all mention of the Land Purchase Department. That branch of the department has assumed such magnitude that I think it deserves to be kept apart, and receive separate treatment in my Statement. Honorable members will remember that I placed upon the table a few days ago a return showing these purchases in very considerable detail. I have also had a sketch map prepared which shows roughly the position of the various purchases on the West Coast since 1870, and that I will also lay on the table. I must caution honorable members that it is not strictly accurate, because a great many of these so-called purchases have not been surveyed; but it will give a general idea of where the blocks lie. Honorable members will remember that this system of purchasing land from the Maoris was initiated afresh, if I may say so, in 1870 by resolution of this House. It assumed considerable dimensions under the Government which preceded the late Government, and between two and three years ago it had got into a position and assumed a form which became very distasteful to members of this House and to the public. It was generally felt that, in the form in which it then existed, it ought to be stopped. The form that then existed, I may say, was, for the most part, purchase by commission. That system is supposed to be abandoned. Although it is not quite abandoned, it is so to a large extent. It was understood, I think, in 1877, when the late Government came into power, that the system of purchasing land from the Maoris was really stopped—that it should not go on to a considerable extent. That may be fairly gathered from the amendment which was proposed by my honorable friend and colleague for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance) to the Native Land Bill of the then Government, and which found support from a large majority of the members of this House. I think that indicated that the pur-

chase of land from the Maoris was substantially to cease. However, it has been renovated in a form, and lately it has been going on to a considerable extent. It has been said, and I believe it is generally felt, that these land-purchase transactions are not a success, commercially speaking; but it has been argued that, although not a success commercially, still they are a success for the settlement of the country. Now, I argue in this way: that, if they are a success commercially, that fact will indicate that they will be a success for the settlement of the country. I go further, and say that, if they are not a success commercially, they will not be a success for the settlement of the country. I will explain what I mean, and it can all be summarized in two words. If the land bought is good, it will cause the settlement of the country; if the land bought is bad, it will not promote the settlement of the country. At considerable trouble, and with assistance for which I cannot be too thankful, I have had prepared a return of the land purchases in the North Island since 1870. Whether this return proves interesting to the House or not, it will be found highly instructive. I refer to it particularly to illustrate the point I have summarized—namely, that if the land bought is good it will promote the settlement of the country, and will be a commercial success; but if it is not good it will not promote settlement, and will not be a commercial success. I think that is a position which all the records we have, or are likely to have, will prove. This statement that I am about to refer to deals with land which has not only been bought from the Maoris, but has actually been handed over to the Waste Lands Boards of the various provincial districts for sale. In the Auckland Provincial District, in 1874, 122,000 acres were handed over for sale, but none was sold. In 1875 none was handed over, and none sold. In 1876, 427,307 acres were handed over, and 302 acres were sold. In 1878 and 1879, 604,239 acres were handed over, and 389 acres were sold. The total area handed over in the Auckland Provincial District from 1870 to 1879 was 1,153,648 acres, and the quantity sold during the same period was 691 acres. That shows that these transactions have not been successful commercially, and they have not settled the country; and, I say, the two things go together. The District of Taranaki furnishes a comparatively satisfactory return. In 1874, 48,770 acres were handed over to the Waste Lands Board, and none were sold. In 1875, 38,499 acres were handed over, and 9,583 acres were sold. In 1876 no land was handed over to the Waste Lands Board, but 6,911 acres were sold. In 1877, 94,950 acres were handed over, and 8,169 acres were sold. In 1878 no land was handed over, but 22,121 acres were sold. In 1879, also, none was handed over, but 5,557 acres were sold. The total handed over in the Provincial District of Taranaki was 182,219 acres; the quantity sold, 52,331 acres. This land was good, and therefore the transactions would probably be a commercial success, and there was a probability, also, of a settlement of the country. In Hawke's Bay there were no transactions from 1870 to 1874. During the years 1875-79 the

quantity of land handed over to the Waste Lands Board consisted of 133,258 acres. The quantity sold in 1875 was 2,554 acres, which was tolerably satisfactory. In 1876, 8,133 acres were sold; in 1877, 9,222 acres; in 1878, 4,437 acres; in 1879, 2,328 acres: making a total quantity sold of 26,654 acres. This was a tolerably satisfactory result, and was owing to the fact that the land was good. In Wellington there were handed over to the Waste Lands Board, in 1874, 180,834 acres, and there were actually sold 42,423 acres. That was before the increase in the price of the land. The subsequent figures relate to sales after the increase in price. In 1875 no land was handed over to the Board, and none was sold. In 1876 there were handed over to the Board 100 acres, and sold nil. In 1877, 160,582 acres were handed over; sold, nil. In 1878, 41,831 acres were handed over; sold, nil. In 1879 none was handed over, and none sold. The total quantity handed over in the Wellington Provincial District was 383,247 acres, and the area sold was 42,423 acres. In this district the land purchased is of a comparatively inferior description; and I say that proves two things: that, where the land is bad, commercial success is not secured, and settlement is not secured. It proves also, or indicates, that where the land is good commercial success will probably be secured, and settlement also. They go hand-in-hand. I think that when the late Government came into office a good many members of this House expected some moderation in the purchase of land from the Natives. But I do not think moderation has been practised. I will state to the House, for the purpose of giving it the figures, that the total appropriation for the purchase of Native lands from 1870 to 1879 was £732,000. The total expenditure for the same period was £705,493. That would leave a balance, but I may explain that that balance has disappeared during the period which has elapsed since the end of the financial year; so that the amount expended is about the same as that appropriated. The amount expended on Native land purchases last year was £124,000. That includes, of course, the sum actually paid for the land, the incidental expenses, and so on; and it includes, also, the sum of £15,000 for opening up roads in the purchased blocks, to which I have already alluded. The estimated expenditure for the current year is a still larger sum than was spent last year. It amounts to £201,100. This, however, ought to suffer reduction by the amount proposed to be expended in opening up purchased blocks, which is estimated this year at £25,000. That would leave £176,000 to be expended during the current year upon the purchase of Native lands. Whatever Government is in power, that sum will have to be provided, because the liabilities are incurred. By the end of December no less a sum than £84,000 will be required to make payments for land purchased from the Maoris. I will conclude this statement by stating the estimated amount required to complete purchases made; and by that I mean land on which payments have been made. The estimated amount is £1,121,000. And I have only to add that these transactions

are still going on. Considering the magnitude of these transactions, honorable members will not be surprised to hear—in fact, it would take a great deal to surprise honorable members now—that the salaries for the officers of this Land Purchase Department amount to £10,265 16s. Of course, there is another very important item, which I have not time to explain to-night very fully—namely, “Incidental Expenses.” But the sum I have named is the sum actually paid for the salaries of the officers of the department. With respect to those salaries, I want to point out—and I do so to strengthen the argument I commenced with, namely, that the control of those moneys is passing away from this House—that, up to the year 1877, the whole of the salaries of those people were voted by the House in detail: the officers’ salaries were given in the estimates, and voted in detail. That has now been altered, and in a way which I do not think is an improvement. A lump sum is now voted, and is distributed, practically, by the Native Minister. Those transactions have attained to such magnitude that I think it is a matter for the serious consideration of this House. It is a question for serious consideration whether the transactions are profitable ones or not; and I use the word “profitable” in the widest sense, as expressing not only the commercial idea, but also the settlement idea. One of the principal West Coast purchasers, in his last report sent to the department, states that he finds that land which he could have purchased two or three years ago for 2s. 6d. or 3s. an acre now costs from 7s. 6d. to 10s. an acre. Now, if the land is worth it, I do not grudge these payments to the Natives, but that is the question. In my opinion, a great deal of the land purchased on the West Coast is not worth the sum paid, or anything like it. I speak with some little knowledge of this particular matter, and in my opinion a great deal of the land purchased upon the West Coast will not promote settlement for years to come. Shall I be saying too much if I say it will not promote settlement to any extent for generations to come? It is not a rocky country for the most part, but when you get back some distance from the coast you come upon some of the most rugged country I have ever seen. Some of these blocks are inaccessible to a high degree. If you tap one portion of a block, the remaining portion would remain inaccessible until a very great expenditure of money had been incurred upon it. A great deal of this land is rugged bush land of a character that, in my opinion, will not encourage settlement, and will not, in fact, be settled upon for many years to come. I say that, whether it is regarded as a matter of commercial profit or in the view of promoting settlement, the aspect of many of these blocks is unsatisfactory in a high degree. When the large amount of money that has been devoted to the purpose of acquiring them is considered, I think it will be admitted on all sides that it is really a matter to which each member of this House should give his careful attention; because I presume interest on this money will have to be paid for years to come, and, if no good result arises from acquiring the

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land, then I say it is an unfortunate thing that we have acquired it. Now, it may be argued, and I dare say it will be argued, that there is competition upon that coast, and that, from the fact that there is private competition, the colony is not giving more than the fair value for the land. I think I am stating the argument against myself as fairly as I can. However, I dissent from that view. I say this: that, in my opinion, with respect to a great deal of the land—two-thirds of the land acquired upon the West Coast—there has been no competition, in the true sense. What I mean is this: that private individuals going to buy that land have not bought it for ordinary purposes, nor for purposes of private speculation and profit. I believe they would not have looked at the land with this object. They have treated for it with a certain object. They enter into negotiations with the Maoris, or get a claim upon the land, for the purpose of parting with it at a higher price to the Government: the object is to get a hold upon the land, and then to offer to hand over their interest to the Government for a consideration. That is the sort of thing that is done. That is not competition in the ordinary sense of the word. There has, in my belief, been no real competition for a great portion of that land which has been purchased on the west coast of this Island. I will give a case in point: There is a block of land estimated at 100,000 acres not very far from Wanganui. I am well acquainted with the nature of that block. Well, Europeans there got a certain hold upon the land, or acquired what they believed to be some right over it, and they offered to hand over their right to the Government for a consideration. They had agreed to pay the Maoris 8s. an acre for the land, and they offered to hand it over to the Government for a consideration—not a very large consideration—and the Government took it. That “consideration” had to be added to the 8s. an acre. I know that block of land well: I am talking now about what I do know. I do not often say as bold a thing in praise of myself, but I consider that I am as good a judge of land required for settlement as any man in this House—quite as good: I do not see why I should not be. Well, I know that block of land, and will tell the House what it is. It consists of sharp ridges, and gullies of enormous depth—the deepest gullies I ever saw in my life. It is bush country, and the sides of the hills are wonderfully steep, so steep that over a great portion of the block, I say, without hesitation, that, if the bush were to be cut down and burnt off and grass sown, the side of the hill would slip away; it would be continually slipping away. No doubt, as is the case in all large tracts of land, there are little spots of some value; but I do not believe that that block is worth, on an average, 1s. 6d. an acre. That is my opinion, from an intimate knowledge of the land. Well, I will take another case. There are a number of these cases: I do not know that I am taking any of them unfairly. I do not believe that I am taking any case unfairly. A gentleman acquired a right over a block of land, consisting of 16,000 acres, some distance up

the Wanganui River. I have not been at the place, so that I do not speak of it from personal knowledge; I speak from a general knowledge of the nature of the country, and I know what the land is like. That land was purchased at 7s. an acre. There is no doubt the land is very inaccessible: it is very broken, and is bush land. The person who purchased it stated that he had paid £3,000 to the Maoris. There were no vouchers showing the payments made. It was stated that he had agreed to pay 7s. an acre, and that he had actually paid £3,000 as advances and incidental expenses. He offered it to the Government to take it over. The Government considered the offer, and gave him £250 in advance. They have taken that block over, and, like many others, it is one of a number of unfortunate transactions.

Mr. MACANDREW.—What is the date of that transaction?

Mr. BRYCE.—It was only three or four weeks ago. I understand why the honorable gentleman puts the question. If I could give him the exact date, I can assure him it would not benefit him much. I was going to say that the acquisition of these blocks of land would not be profitable, and would not promote settlement. I was also going to point out that really a great many of these things must depend, under our present system, upon the will of the Minister. I really ask honorable members whether they are satisfied that a system of that sort should continue. I myself should be very sorry to be trusted with the administration under such a system. I believe that I should be likely to go wrong and do things that would possibly not be right. At any rate, whether the system commends itself to the minds of honorable members of this House or not, it does not commend itself to my mind. It would not, I think, commend itself, as a private piece of business, to the mind of any business man. If it did, I think he would soon find himself in a very difficult position. I say, although the resources of this colony are great, although we have a power of wealth within ourselves that it is very hard to injure or destroy, a process like this, if carried on to any great extent, will be, at any rate, a very great strain upon the prosperity of the colony. Well, Sir, I will pass now from that part of my subject. I had more to say upon it; but the truth is my voice is failing me, and for that reason I shall allude to another point as briefly as possible. I do not know whether I am able to make myself heard by honorable members. What I wish to allude to now is the political aspect of the question. I do not mean the party aspect of the question at all—in fact, I mean quite the reverse of that. When the late Government came into office, I think Native affairs were in a pretty hopeful state. I think, in order to satisfy ourselves of that, we need do nothing more than look back at the speeches made by the honorable member for Christchurch City (Sir G. Grey) and the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan). Since that time, as I have already pointed out, the personal influence of the two greatest Maori experts I believe in the colony has been exerted to the

utmost; and I should like honorable members to ask themselves whether or not the result has been satisfactory. Are Native affairs in a hopeful state now? At that time, in my opinion, the Maoris were sick of a state of isolation. I am speaking of a part of the country pretty well understood. The Maoris in that part of the country were becoming sick of the state of isolation in which they had been for some time, and I believe it only required a little patience, a little firmness, and a little justice to secure the best results to both races. But when we went among the Maoris and showed so much anxiety to do something, and so much anxiety to induce them to do something, I think that we took a wrong course. I think, when we petted them and fondled them, and made too much of them, we engendered in their minds that suspicion which begot contempt. I think the Maoris were led to suppose that the will of the Native Minister was all-in-all; and justice on all occasions—at all events, on many occasions—was made to give place to expediency. I think, if we had shown more firmness and justice, and less of what has been mistakenly called kindness, the result would have been better for the country—better for the country, I say, in the broadest sense—better for the Europeans and better for the Maori people. Sir, it will be expected, perhaps, that I should say something as to our relations with the Maoris in that part of the country, and that I should speak upon a subject which has been spoken of very frequently in this House—the negotiations with Rewi. Now, I do not think it desirable that I should do so—I am not able to say, with the honorable member for Parnell, that, if it had not been for that great meeting, we should have had a war raging in that country.

Mr. MOSS.—I did not say so; I said that if it had not been for that meeting we should have had to keep a large force in the Waikato.

Mr. BRYCE.—I am bound to accept the honorable gentleman's denial. I have not the right to refer to a previous debate, and he puts me out of Court on both points. I see no reason to suppose that that Native meeting obviated the necessity of keeping a very large force in the Waikato. I see no reason whatever to suppose anything of that sort. However, I do not wish to discuss that meeting, and I do not wish to discuss the negotiations with Rewi, because, as we all know, there is a strong possibility—at any rate, so say the Opposition—of the late Native Minister coming back to these benches in the course of a few hours or a few days; and if I can do no good I shall take care to do no harm in that matter; and therefore I will not go into that question, and say things from this bench which possibly might do harm. With respect to affairs on the West Coast, of which I have perhaps a more intimate knowledge, I am afraid that I must say very much the same thing—that I think it would be imprudent for me to discuss at any great length from this bench the course of treatment which I think ought to be adopted on that coast. I may say this: that I do not feel inclined to blame the late Government very severely, or as severely as they have been blamed

by some persons in this matter. I believe indeed that the time was when the difficulties could have been met and cured; but I admit that there was much doubt surrounding the subject, and it has always been my habit in life to give gentlemen, when I differed from them, the benefit of any doubt which existed in my mind. I can add little to what was said the other day by the Premier. For our own sake we ought to cause an inquiry to be made into whatever grievances the Maoris have on that coast. I myself—and I think the late Native Minister agrees with me in this—am of opinion that there are probably no grievances to speak of on what is known as the Waitemata Plains proper. But there are, no doubt, grievances—I think they have been magnified somewhat—of one kind or another along that coast; and I think that, for our own sake, for the sake of our own reputation abroad and in the colony, we ought to have those grievances inquired into. But, having said that, I wish to say clearly that I have no hope that that inquiry will touch the trouble which exists at present on that coast. That trouble, in my opinion, lies far deeper than that. The question of reserves has been strongly spoken of in this House, and it was thought that a proper adjustment of reserves would settle the difficulty. I do not think so. I believe the trouble lies deeper. The trouble lies greatly in this: that almost the whole of the Maoris along that coast are deeply infatuated with the belief that Te Whiti holds supernatural powers, and that he will recover not only the reserves, but also the Plains, and everything else. But, Sir, I would say that it is a melancholy thing at this time of day that for months past the peace of the colony, or, at any rate, of that part of the colony, has had to depend upon the discretion of a man who is so far gone in insanity that he has a belief that he can raise men from the dead. I say it is a melancholy reflection, not only in view of the large expenditure which is going on, and which is costing the colony money that it can ill spare, but it is a melancholy reflection in view of the loss to the settlers on that coast. Honorable members have very little idea of the state of anxiety in which those settlers live. Many of them are my intimate friends—gentlemen with whom I have been associated in a way that we are not likely to forget; and when I see them being actually ruined before my eyes by this state of things my feelings are really more than I can express. Great as is the loss to the colony—and much as I regret that loss—entailed by the maintenance of an armed force there, I deplore the loss that is falling upon the settlers far more; and I do say that the settlers have a claim upon the consideration and sympathy of this House on account of the noble manner in which they both acted and forbore from acting on the late occasion. I will pass now for a moment to another trouble—the outrage which took place at Ohinemuri. I am glad to be able to take a more cheerful view of that matter. I believe that the magnitude of that outrage has been exaggerated in a wonderful degree; nor do I apprehend that any very serious difficulty is likely to arise from it. It is, of course, highly unsatisfac-

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tory that such an outrage should be committed in our midst, and that we should not be able to apprehend the people who perpetrated it without so much trouble. At the same time I think that the hapu to which these people belong is a very small one. It is isolated, and I believe I am speaking from good information when I say that they have not got the sympathy of any other section of Maoris, with the exception of perhaps a dozen or two individuals. Then there is another outrage, which took place at the Bay of Islands lately, which is calculated, I think, to leave a very uncomfortable impression upon members' minds, no matter from what aspect they view it. It is true that it is simply a conflict between Maoris—I do not know that white people are in any way implicated; but the melancholy part of the affair to me is this: that in the Maori eyes our law and government should have fallen into so low a state that they should suddenly resort to arms about a question which could have been easily settled in a Court of law. Considering the peaceful and law-abiding manner in which those tribes had previously been living for so many years, I say it is a melancholy thing that this outrage has taken place; and I think this House would do well to seriously inquire whether the personal mode of government on which I have been harping throughout my speech has not something to do with the change for the worse which has taken place in the Maori mind. I have now said all that I need say, perhaps, in reviewing the circumstances of the colony as connected with this department; and I might, I suppose, very well stop here. But I should like, before I sit down, to indicate in a few words how I think these things might be cured. To effect a cure, I would deliberately set to work to destroy the principal part of the department as a department. I would destroy that part of the department which I have so often called the personal government; and, to do that, I would divest the department of its functions. I alluded just now to the Native schools, and I said I would refer to the subject again. What I want to say about the Native schools is, that in many cases these schools were, a short time ago, in a highly unsatisfactory state. But that, I believe, was brought to the attention of the late Native Minister, and he consented—at least, so I am given to understand—that Native schools, which cost about £14,000 per annum, should be transferred to the Education Department. That, in my opinion, is a very great change for the better. It is so obvious an improvement, indeed, that the only wonder is that it was not done long ago. Then I would take, for instance, the roads in Native districts, and place them—they are now nominally under the Public Works Department—absolutely under that department; and the expenditure should depend, not upon the advice of any one Minister—not upon the personal advice of a Minister—but on responsible reports from officers, just the same as other works in the department are managed. I would also take the next vote—the vote for opening roads in purchased land—and deal with it in precisely the same manner. The Native Minister should not have the power of distributing these

moneys. Then I would send the pensioners, under the Civil List or otherwise, to the Colonial Secretary's Department. I would send the assessors to the Department of Justice. When these things are done contingencies might be put down at a very low sum, and need not be exceeded. I admit that that would to a large extent destroy the prestige—the personal prestige, I would say—of the Native Minister among the Maoris; but I am of opinion that the sooner it is destroyed the better. If these things that I have indicated were done, the department—or that portion of it, at any rate, which I consider so objectionable—would in effect disappear, and in respect to the Native Minister himself he might say, "Othello's occupation's gone." That, in the very briefest terms, indicates the course I would adopt for the improvement of the department; and honorable members will observe that it would be an improvement of a peculiar kind—it would improve it out of existence. Now, with respect to the alienation of Native lands: that is a very important question, and I am sorry that my voice is failing me so much. With respect to the alienation of Native lands, I have for a long time, as the late Native Minister very well knows, held pretty positive opinions on that question. I may say that it is a question of very great difficulty, and, notwithstanding that I hold these opinions in a sort of positive way, I have never felt quite sure that, if carried into effect, they would produce good results unmingled with evil. There is no system which could be devised for dealing with these Maori lands that would not be open to very considerable objection. We ought to take, I imagine, that system which would be open to the least objection. Now, I may say, by way of precaution, that this subject has not been considered in the Cabinet of which I have the honor to be a member, and therefore what I am going to say just now will not be to any full extent an expression of the opinion of the Cabinet. I may say that I believe all the members of the Cabinet agree with me in these views; but, as the matter has not been formally considered, I should not like to commit my colleagues to them because I express them. What I think is this: that the greatest facilities that could be granted should be given to the Maoris for surveying the boundaries of their land, for the purpose of ascertaining the title. That having been done, and the title ascertained—the machinery for which, I may say, requires improvement; but I need not go into that—I think that the Maoris ought to have some mode provided for them of placing their land before the public for sale, by auction or otherwise; and I should think that the best way of enabling them to do that would be to create a Board for the purpose. I do not know whether the present Waste Lands Board could not be to some extent utilized, but the great idea would be to create a Board which would be popular with the Maoris, and which would secure their confidence. That could be done, I believe, by introducing a considerable Maori element into the Board. And I would allow the Maoris, if they wished to sell the land, to place it for sale in the hands of the Board. I may say I would stop the

sale to private individuals; but I would allow them to put the lands into the hands of the Board for sale. Then it should be the duty of that Board to sell the land under the waste land laws of the country, and they might be altered to suit special circumstances. Then the Board would deduct all costs of survey and the subdivision of the land. It would deduct also a percentage for the purpose of opening roads through the land; because I would point out that that is required for the purpose of promoting the sale of the land itself. It would enhance the value of the land, and the Native owners would certainly be no losers by it. Having made these deductions, I would then hand over the whole of the balance to the Native owners. I would also provide the means for investment, if they wished to invest it. I would not go in for deriving a profit from it, but would allow the Maori owners to reap all the advantage from the sale of the land. I think the Maoris would soon become aware of the advantages of such a system, and would recognize that this Board were merely their agents in the matter, and would get the best price for the lands that could be got for them. I think it quite possible, if this system were initiated, that it would have the effect, in the first place, of causing a considerable stoppage in the sale of land by Maoris; but I do not think that would do much harm. I think upon the whole it would produce a good effect, and I believe that the system would become very popular amongst the Maori people. I may say that I have already laid this plan before Maoris, and they appear to take to it. Well, Sir, I do not know whether the House is satisfied or not with the mode in which Native affairs have been conducted in the past. I have indicated pretty plainly that I do not approve it; and that has been my opinion as long as I can remember. For many years past I have objected to the personal mode of conducting the Native Department. I have suggested a remedy in a very rough way. I have thought a great deal about it, and it will be for the House to consider the plan which I have laid before you this evening. If the House approves of the present mode of conducting Native matters, there is an end of that; but, if they think that mode is wrong, and that I have provided a remedy, they will adopt it. I hope, however, that, if honorable members do not think the remedy I have suggested a proper one, they will propose a remedy of their own. I have to thank honorable members most sincerely for the attention with which they have listened to me through the most unpleasant speech I ever made in my life. At the commencement of my Statement I promised that I should conclude by moving the adjournment of the House; and I now beg to make a motion to that effect.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Sir, I have been in the House with the honorable gentleman for the last seven or eight years. If there be a man in the House who commands my personal respect, it is that honorable gentleman. I must say that he has done his work to-night exactly as I expected he would do it—perfectly fairly and above-board. I shall be compelled to reply to the charges that have been brought against the conduct of

the Native Department, and I am sure that the House, having heard the accusations, will give me a fair and patient hearing. Now, Sir, before I go to the main part of my reply, I may say this much: I feel it a very heavy task to work out, not only against the matter of the speech, but against the honorable gentleman, and I can assure him that at the present time he is the salvation of the Government. But for his being there, they would not be in office even now. If I had said so before, it might have been said that I was trying to "temper the wind to the shorn lamb;" but the honorable gentleman has made his speech and disclosed all his facts. But for his being where he now is, those honorable gentlemen who sit beside him would not be able to keep back the vote of want of confidence. Sir, the honorable gentleman referred first of all to the fact that, in his opinion, the Government were not there by unfair means. Now, that has been so much discussed that I shall not reply to it at length. As a matter of fact, the House and they themselves know perfectly well how they got there. We know how they are trying to stick there; but, in my opinion, they will not remain there long. Two or three days' time will permit other persons to take their places who will enjoy the confidence of this House and the country. It is quite true, Sir, that we refused to accept coalition. Reconstruction, and reconstruction only was expected. We declined to allow the honorable gentleman opposite, who moved a resolution baited to catch members on our side, to place himself at the head of a Government which was and now is in a minority. And we were right in our determination. At the time the vote was carried we were virtually in a majority, and we are in a majority at the present time. The honorable gentleman dare not to-night take a vote upon that question. Sir, I do not deny for a moment that parties are tolerably evenly balanced, and I admit also that the present Government have a fair amount of support in the country, but not sufficient to keep them on those benches—just sufficient to make them a decent minority and to constitute them a respectable Opposition in this House. Sir, I admit the fairness with which the honorable gentleman (Mr. Bryce) has dealt with the figures in regard to the Native Department. They might have been, in the hands of an unfair man, possibly made the basis of a bitter, disagreeable, personal discourse. He has dealt with them from a fair party point of view; and I hope I shall be able to reply in the same way, and to avoid importing into my remarks anything like personal feeling. The honorable gentleman told us that he would give us specimens of the expense of the department, and he gave us specimens, first of all, of the ordinary department itself. His object was to explain to the House, and to get the House to approve of it as a principle, the fact that personal government should cease to exist. I shall come presently to the question as to what personal government means. I think I shall be able to show that there is nothing in the word, and that the Minister of each department is the personal governor of it, and must be so to all intents

Mr. Bryce

and purposes. Sir, from whom did we get personal government? Honorable gentlemen on the other side of the House, especially on those benches, cheer loudly; but I repeat, from whom did personal government come to us as a legacy? From the honorable gentlemen opposite themselves. There are some of the men who were brought up with personal government, who believed in it, and who are now raising it as a cry against those to whom the legacy was left. I say, there they are, the creators of this personal government of which they now complain; and I shall show presently that they need not be ashamed of the fact, because, as a matter of fact, unless you continue that personal government in Native matters you cannot escape the troubles which are now pending. Sir, the honorable gentleman very fairly put this fact before the House: that in the old times a small sum of money went a long way—that a stick of tobacco, a pipe, a box of matches, or a few pounds of flour, would do more, perhaps, than a million now. The people are improving in the scale of civilization, have higher and more expensive wants, and therefore you cannot expect £3,000 to go as far now as it did ten years ago. Sir, we are told that this system of personal government might have been right some years ago, but is not right now. It is an easy thing to say that; but where is the proof that the assertion is true? Have the Maori people ceased to exist? Has the past been forgotten? Do you govern the whole of the country at the present time? Is the law in force all over New Zealand? Certainly not. There is a large area of land over which the law does not run, and for years people have been living there in violation of the law. Yet we are told that the condition of affairs has changed. We shall see whether it has changed or not. It is said that two of the greatest experts of the colony failed to bring about a solution of the Native difficulty. I presume one of them must have been the late Premier (Sir G. Grey). I hope I shall not be considered vain if I think that I am the second one meant. What is the fact? From 1864 these people lived in a state of perfect isolation down to 1877. It is true that Ministers crawled up there occasionally, once or twice—sneaked into the country, I may say—and saw a few people, made a big report in the papers, called it a large meeting of the Maori people, and declared that a settlement of the Native difficulty had been brought about; and one gentleman received special honors from the Crown for going up there and having a talk with a few Natives. I told the House the other night that on one occasion a certain person remained for six weeks in the Waikato on purpose to see one Maori, and when he saw him he shook hands with him, addressed to him a few words, and came away rejoicing that he had done so much. We met, not one or two people, but thousands, and for weeks held meetings in the King country at their own request, and for the express purpose of bringing about a peaceful solution of the Native difficulty. At Hikurangi we offered those terms which the late Government had previously offered, and which they were then prepared to accept. I come next to Te Kopua;

we had four or five thousand people assembled there, altogether peaceable and quiet, and, during the whole of the two months, not one instance of a breach of the law took place. The discussions were fair and good-tempered, and, although nothing was finally settled, as a matter of fact it was the biggest and most important gathering of Maoris which ever took place in the colony. Sir, we are told that nothing came of these things. That reminds me of this fact—a fact I do not like to enlarge upon, because it looks like sounding one's own praises: that, at the present time, there is in this House a Native gentleman who took part in all those meetings, and who will tell you that the results of those meetings are growing day by day, and that, if he had now the power to go back for the next two or three months, he would be able to bring about a perfect solution of the whole difficulty. Not only did we hold those meetings with them; but what happened besides? Who would have dreamt for a moment, three years ago, or five years ago, that a Maori meeting could have been held in the King country; that the Natives in that locality would have visited in a friendly spirit European settlements; that they could have been induced to go down to large centres of population? When have they ever before been employed to keep the peace of the country? Yet we have done it. Take the case of the Thames outrage the other day. When those people proposed to escape into the Waikato, what did the King people do at that time? A few years ago, would they have said, "Stop those persons coming into the King country, and hand them over to justice"? Certainly not. They would have opened their arms to receive them, and the Government would have had to endeavour to explain why they were not caught. The honorable gentleman was quite right in saying that I have been besieged by the Maori people all over the country. I admit it. But I should like to know what he proposes. If, while he sits on those benches, he chooses to keep those people at arm's-length, I do not envy him his position. They have a right to have access to the Native Minister. Do not Europeans go to European Ministers to state their wants? And if the honorable gentleman follows out the rule that he seems desirous of laying down, he will not keep his seat there very long. It would appear to be a crime on the part of a Maori to ask to be allowed to see a member of the Government.

MR. BRYCE.—No.

MR. SHEEHAN.—I assumed that to be one of the reasons for the abolition of personal government. It is a still greater crime for them to approach a Minister through the post office or the telegraph office. What other means have they of making their wishes known? What does the honorable gentleman wish them to do? Is he going to hand them over to the tender mercies of the clerks in the Government offices? We have all had some experience of that—of being referred from A to B, from B to C, and so on to D, E, F, G, H, day after day, week after week, before we could get our business done. What do members of this House do if they have business to transact? They go down to see Ministers. Be-

cause a man happens to be a member of this House, because he has a vote to give when a division comes on, he is listened to and attended to; but the Maori people, from whom you take taxation, to whom you give very little—they must go to the messenger at the door; they cannot be allowed to approach the presence of a great Minister. The honorable member gave us what he was pleased to call a specimen-page of the telegrams I received, and brought forward an application to the Government for £2,000—which he said was granted—as a fair sample of the kind of applications made to the Government. What are the real facts of the case? This man—one of the principal chiefs of the Thames, likewise a Government officer appointed by the Government of which the present Treasurer was a member—spent—foolishly, I admit, and against my advice—about £2,000 in building a large house in honor of the Queen and the law; and, when it came to the question of paying money, his banker, like the Government banker, was not disposed to assist him. Then he applied to me for this £2,000. I found upon record a promise of the late Sir Donald McLean to pay him £1,000 for certain services rendered, and I agreed to fulfil that promise. That reduced the amount to £1,000; and I agreed to advance him the other £1,000. That man is anxious to sell a large quantity of valuable land—he is now offering it to the Government—land which will more than balance that £1,000; and my honorable friend can buy it to-morrow if he chooses. We paid £1,000 to meet this, one of those unfulfilled promises of the late Sir Donald McLean which have already caused so much trouble, and we advanced £1,000 on the best possible security; and if the honorable member wants to get that £1,000 back he can get it to-morrow with the greatest ease. The land is worth more than the amount due to the bank and the Government. The honorable gentleman says this was an incident of personal government. Well, perhaps it is not competent for me to disclose Cabinet transactions, but I appeal to my late colleagues if this matter was not fully discussed and settled in Cabinet. We knew perfectly well what we were doing; and I am satisfied that, if the papers are brought before the House, we can defend our action from the beginning to the end of it. I now come to this point: the reference that was made to the sums of money which were placed in the charge of the Native Minister. It appears that during the last two years, on account of Native roads, there has been spent the enormous sum of £15,000, and that the Native Minister, on account of roads on lands in course of negotiation, has spent another sum of £15,000; and we have had a picture drawn for us by the honorable gentleman of the evils arising from that expenditure. Where was the honorable gentleman in 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, and 1875, when the Ministry of the day was spending three-quarters of a million of money without a single specific appropriation? I will prove it. A return was brought up to this House showing an expenditure of something like £20,000. It was moved for, I believe, by the honorable member for Clutha.

Mr. Sheehan

He brought the matter up again when that return appeared, and the result was, it was sent back for further consideration, and another return was brought up composed of three items only. The Government of which the Premier was a member had hundreds of thousands to spend in that way, and they spent that money without appropriation and without reference to the House.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I can prove it. I can show that £400,000 was spent without one solitary specific appropriation; and when we saw the way it was going—where it was being spent—we knew perfectly well who was controlling the Government purse. I do hope my honorable friend, whose mind is impartial, will bear in mind, when he talks about our spending £30,000, that our predecessors in office spent sums, with not half so much advantage, as compared with which what we have spent is really trifling. From 1870 to 1876 they spent a whole loan on Native purposes—the Defence Loan, it was called; and when the honorable gentleman talks about the expenses of the department, I would like to ask him to look up the old vouchers, and then he will see whether or not we have been such very “bad boys” indeed. Now, we have heard a great deal about our expenditure on roads, and so forth. What is the fact? The greater part of the North Island at the present time is Maori land. Will the honorable gentlemen come down with a Bill for taxing Native land for Road Board purposes? They dare not do it; I defy them to do it. Then, what would they do? Will they allow the settlers to pay the whole of the taxation for the construction and maintenance of these roads in Native districts? It was thoroughly well known that this proposal to spend money in Native districts was intended to be a compromise, and to give the small settlers some compensation for the fact that the time had not yet arrived when the Maori people could be called upon to pay rates towards the maintenance of the roads. Are the Government going to alter that and bring down a Bill compelling the Natives to pay rates? If so, I trust my honorable friend will cease all pretension to personal government in reference to that taxation; because I am quite sure if he goes into the King country to collect the rates he will never come out of it again. Then, the expenditure of another £15,000 for a somewhat similar purpose appears to have been a great crime also. How much was spent in the same direction three years ago? That which three years ago was a venial sin is now a mortal offence. What was the object of that vote? It was this: that we found it better to buy the land from the Natives at a fair price, and to employ the Maori people in opening up roads and approaches to settlements, than to pay money for rations and gratuities; and money was so spent, as I can show. If you look at the matter fairly, you will see the good policy of that course. Are you not imposing a large measure of taxation on the Maori people? Have you not obtained, and are you not expecting to obtain, a considerable revenue from land acquired from them at a penny an acre, or even a farthing an acre? Then, what reason have you to deal so

hardly with the Maori people? and if they do get a few thousands spent among them in giving them mere rations for their work, the people of the colony and this House ought to be glad rather than sorry. Another crime—although I must say I thought it was a peculiar feature in connection with personal government—is, that this money was spent through local bodies. I look on the party opposite as an abolition Ministry, and am very much surprised that they should appear to think that, instead of handing this money over to local bodies to spend it, we should have spent the money ourselves. Had I kept that money myself, and spent it through my officers, it might have been said that I did so for purposes of patronage; but when I handed it over to bodies governing according to law—bodies which have to keep accounts, and show all their transactions to the public—I must say I fail to see where the crime could have been. I am sure of this: When the honorable gentleman has had the experience I have had he will come down with the same view as myself. His work is all before him. He is now enjoying what I may call the Ministerial honeymoon; but, when it comes to furnishing the house and keeping it going, he will find matters very different. If he wears the same pleasant face twelve months hence as he does now I will trust him better than I do at present; but I am afraid he will not. We have been told that an immense sum of money has been spent at Coromandel and at the Thames. I think, if the honorable gentleman had known more about that part of the country, he would not have talked as he did; and he might, I think, have said a little about the Patea County. That county came out of the transaction remarkably well. There was some money spent under personal government in that county, and the people were exceedingly anxious to get it. They never said, when the money was being spent, "Oh! this is the fruits of personal government. You know you ought not to spend this money." So long as the money went to that County Council we heard nothing at all about personal government. I do not believe in this sort of thing—gentlemen helping me to commit a crime, and then "peaching," and getting part of the reward for turning informers. I presume this is the new doctrine: that the moneys which this House chooses to place at the disposal of the Government are to be spent by the Government alone. County Councils, and Highway Boards, and all local bodies must know that from this time forth they must regard having public money to spend as an unpardonable crime. Let the local bodies know that in future they are to have no assistance in carrying on local works, and see what they say. Take the case of the Thames. The Thames is almost all Native land. It is all Native land except what the Government have bought. Even the town itself is on Native land. This land cannot be made to pay the ordinary taxation; the gold duty and the miner's-right fees all go to the Maoris; and the Europeans have to find the money to pay the whole cost of the local government. If those people had been born in that lucky part of the country from which the Minis-

ter of Education (Mr. Rolleston) comes; if they had been born in that part of the country where the Maori lands were all secured at a farthing an acre, and where they squashed out the whole of the rights of the Native people, and have fought ever since against giving them any fair share of the land sold—sold on that peculiar system known as the gridironing system; if they had secured ample reserves of the public estate to keep them going; if they had got a few thousands or so to make themselves branch railways, there would have been no difficulty about it. But because this poor, suffering district, living on the taxation of the people alone, where you dare not touch the Maori people for taxation, was given that assistance to which it had every right, I am accused of all sorts of high crimes and misdemeanours. I should be quite prepared to go to any district of the North Island, even to Wanganui, to be tried for that offence; and if I did not get a clear verdict of acquittal I should be surprised. My honorable friend, speaking of the case of the Thames, says he does not know whether they were county roads or otherwise. I do not know what he calls county roads, but I know this: that, if you tax the people and take their money, they want roads. We are told that the public money was borrowed for railway purposes only. So it was for a few years; but the time is coming when you will have to tackle the question of the county roads. It is an acknowledged fact, now, that even in the South the system of county government has failed utterly; and, if the late Government did step in and give a helping hand to some of the poorer districts, they deserve credit rather than blame. Sir, I scarcely think I am responsible for the fact that there are Maori pensioners in the colony. I think I heard of their existence many years ago, and I might go so far as to say that there are gentlemen in this House who knew of the existence of these pensioners twenty years ago. Neither am I responsible for the appointment of assessors. They are a creation of past Governments. As to the Native policemen, they also were left behind by my predecessor. Now, I hope my honorable friend, who has a great feeling of scorn for the system of Maori government, who would keep the Maoris at arm's-length, will travel round and attempt to dismiss all these pensioners and assessors. I think his great trouble will be to keep from putting more on; and I think the House will agree with me that in some cases the refusal would be an act of injustice, when you come to look at the condition of the people, and what they have done for the public. But I think the honorable gentleman will admit that I am not the creator of these offices, that I found them in existence when I became a member of the Government, and that I carried them on as I found them. I have not increased their cost, and I think the House will agree that I have carried on the system satisfactorily. We are told that the Native Minister has introduced personal government into the administration of Native affairs—this fearful personal government. The Native Minister, having the power to appoint a few assessors at £40 a year, and a few policemen at £16 a year, has established

a personal régime—an awful personal government. Why, Sir, is it only in the Native Department that this personal influence is exercised? Is it there only that the power of appointment is exercised? What takes place in the other departments? Would not the honorable gentlemen on those benches to-morrow put in their own friends and relations, even down to their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts? I should like to know how many friends have been provided for even during the short time they have been in office. Sir, I dislike this mock-modesty. What is a Minister for, if he cannot settle a matter of this sort without tendering advice to the Governor on the subject? Those honorable gentlemen will be badgered every day of their lives for the next twelve months if they remain in office; and what will they do? Let me take the case of the Colonial Treasurer. He may be applied to for a cadetship of £75 a year. He recommends it without consulting his colleagues, because it is well known that in the case of an appointment under £200 he need not submit it to the Cabinet. And what will be the result? He will be held up as a fearful example of personal government. If the term is not unparliamentary, I must say that I never heard such terrible "rot." We are told in the same way that the Native Minister, having such enormous sums to spend—£20,000 in one case and £15,000 in the other—was subjected to a pressure of a most terrible kind. Now, Sir, coming from that bench, and looking at those people, who had millions to spend when they were in office, I must say that that is grossly unkind. Look at the public works system. How was that used? Look at the roads the "continuous" Ministry made in different parts of the country to induce members to cross from one side of this House to the other. Can these things be forgotten? And yet we are told of the fearful things the Native Minister has done. Why, Sir, one gentleman on that bench has given away hundreds of thousands of pounds in this way. And this is personal government! We can afford to be told of the little exercise of patronage that has been talked so much about, when things like this have been done. We know that for the last seven or eight years the continuance of the Government in office was simply a question of roads and bridges. And we know that these were not given because there was any great necessity for them, but because support was necessary to keep the Government in power. I do not deny that we have done this to some extent; but in doing it we have simply followed out the system of our predecessors. But now that they have come back to office they put on the austere look of an old maid of forty, and say, "Goodness gracious! how awful! What a horrible thing!" I think my honorable friend ought to have smiled when he told us that. He ought to have looked over at me and winked, because he and I know so much better. I protest against people talking what I may term "highfalutin'" politics pure and simple—getting up in this House, calling themselves great statesmen, expounding high principles, and talking as if they could not descend to anything below the dignity

of a statesman; and the next minute you see them going out into the lobby to look after some member who is reported to be "going wrong." We know that this very minute, if the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government were told that one of his side was going at all "wrong," he would get off his bench and say, "Where is he? We must keep him right."

Mr. HALL.—You do it.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Yes; but there is this difference: We admit it, and you do not. Now, Sir, I will refer to the case of the chief at Auckland. And I ask the House to pay particular attention to this point, because it may have been an error in judgment to undertake such a case; but I will put it to the House fairly, so that honorable members may judge of the two versions. It is the case of the Maori chief who went to law and lost his suit. Well, what are the facts? They are notorious throughout the Province of Auckland, and are these: that before a Court of justice, all the parties being British subjects, five Maori witnesses, all men of straightforward character, were disbelieved upon an essential fact in the case, upon the evidence of the defendant. They swore to a fact which, if true, would have given them a verdict; but the evidence of this single person, this European, was accepted in preference to theirs; and the chief, who is now a member of this House, was cast in costs to the amount of £500. I felt that a scandal had been thrown upon the British name, and that we ought to feel ashamed of our Courts of law when such a thing as that could happen. There is a good deal of truth in the statement of the Natives that in a European Court their evidence will not be believed. There are men in this House who know it to be true, but, for their own purposes, they say nothing about it. In that case, with the consent of my colleagues, I agreed to pay the honorable gentleman's expenses, and also to secure him a new trial if possible. I also intended to bring the defendant up for perjury, but I was stopped by a compromise which was effected between the parties. Now, so far from this being done for the purpose of bringing this honorable gentleman into the House, I advised him not to come into the House at all, but to act as a sensible man, to mind his own business, and to stick to his salary. Here is another case: My honorable friend, though he has been Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee for many years, has not yet got into the background of the Native Department. He referred to the case of a Native chief whose wife died, and who had been put to considerable expense. What happened? The honorable gentleman's colleagues cheered when he made the statement, and the honorable member for Avon tried to look as if he was greatly shocked. Why, Sir, in the Native Office are the printed forms which are made out in all similar cases when money is lent, and any man who has been in the Native Office must have known that. I do not object to the payment being challenged, but I do object to people who know so much better putting up these bogus cases for the purpose of creating sympathy. If the honorable gentleman wants to know where

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these forms are, he will find them in the Treasury. They are the usual forms upon which money is lent—to be got back if it can be got back. In this case the chief concerned is very well off in the way of land and property, and if the honorable gentleman has any doubt about the security I will undertake to say that the money shall be forthcoming in twenty-four hours. Well, Sir, I come next to a case in respect to which I challenge criticism; and that is, the question of the employment of the Maori lads. What have we been doing for years? Have we not been spending money on the education of these youths? And what has happened? Is it not very well known that if they go back again amongst their Maori friends they become more Maori than ever? And if they are allowed to settle down amongst the lowest class of the European population they become lost for ever. We felt that it was time to give them a chance. We have been talking here for years about the equal rights of these people with ourselves, we have been calling them our fellow-subjects, we have been declaiming about their right to a fair share in the government of the country, and have been telling them that their children had a just claim to a share in that government: I thought it was time that something should be done to show that we really meant what we said; and it was for that purpose, and that purpose alone, that those youths were brought down here. They were brought down to get employment in the Government service. I call the attention of my honorable friends the Maori members to this fact: that, while I employed some of these lads in my department, and placed four—not one, as the honorable gentleman says—in the Printing Office, I could not get a single one of the Under Secretaries to take any into his department. We talk of men's rights, and of all being equal under the law, and all that sort of thing; but when there is a chance of doing anything for these people and giving them employment, we simply sit upon them. I hope my honorable friends will bear that fact in mind. I quite admit the justice of the objection to the fact of there being so many of these youths in this town; but what I should like to do, and what the honorable gentleman ought to do, is to distribute them amongst different departments in other places. I have done that myself, and if he takes the trouble he will find plenty of employment for these youths, and for many more besides. And now, Sir, I am looking at the time this debate has taken up, and I propose to shorten my remarks as much as possible. We have had a Statement from the honorable gentleman—a fair Statement—and I believe the figures are correct as showing the total sum spent in excess of the amount voted. I admit the expenditure has exceeded the appropriation; but, at the same time, the House must consider various facts in order to arrive at a right conclusion. In the first place, there is charged in these accounts an amount that is not an expenditure at all. My honorable friend who was Public Works Minister in the late Government was a shrewd Scotchman, and he took very good care that there should be no charge put down to his department that he could avoid; so he charged

me with the railway fares of several Maoris who were sent by train. There is a large amount put down for that which is really no charge at all, but a transfer.

Mr. BRYCE.—Eight hundred pounds. I mentioned that.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Yes. Then we come to the expenses of the Maori meetings. I think we put down the cost of the Kopua meeting at £4,000. I did not hear what he said was the cost of the Waitara meeting.

Major ATKINSON.—They were all over £1,000.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Very well; and it is very easy to bring these up and say, "There is a sum of money to expend without any vote of the House!" But we have to go beyond that. We have to consider whether these meetings ought to have been held; whether they have done good; and I say that if it can be proved that they have—even only up to the amount spent upon them—helped to open up country for settlement, then we can come to this House and say, "If we did wrong in spending that money we did it in the public good," and I am certain the House would bear us out. For about three years before we came into office the policy of the Government had not been unfavourable to the Maori people. They had ignored them altogether. They pursued a policy which I hope my honorable friend will not follow if he remains in office—the policy of shutting the door in their face. But when we came into office there was an impression abroad, and especially amongst the Maori people—whether it was right or not it is not for me to say—that there was a Ministry in power favourable to the Maoris. What was the consequence? That in 1878 fully five hundred Maoris came down here to Wellington to transact business—to interview Ministers, to make applications for land, to learn what they should do when they went before the Native Land Court; and, in fact, to consult the Government on many matters as their friends. Many of these Natives were men of high rank among their people, who lived, while in Wellington, as their predecessors had done, in the Maori hostelry or at the public expense. It may be said to me, "You had no right to sanction that expenditure." Well, that raises a further question. These men—or fully three-fourths of them—were men who were engaged in selling blocks of land to the Government, and the refusal to grant a claim of the kind they made would simply have converted friends into enemies; and the saving of £5 passage-money might have cost the colony some £20 or £30 in the price of the land we wanted to buy. All these things had to be considered. I take the full responsibility of the action on myself, and am quite prepared to suffer at the hands of the House and my party if I have done wrong. We are told that this is another way in which personal government does mischief. All I can say is that, if there is a person in this colony who exercises personal government, it is the Auditor-General. He took very good care to overhaul my accounts; and, if I paid any money without the authority of this House, you may be very sure I did not pay it

without the authority of the law. I come now to the Land Purchase Department, and on that subject I take issue with the honorable gentleman at once. The policy of the late Government was this: We required to obtain land for the public estate rather than let it fall into the hands of private persons. I admit, as a first principle, we have to give a fair price for the land; but, if the public can obtain land when it is required, they are entitled to it in preference to private individuals. My honorable friend has very much changed his ideas in this respect. Time was when he thought very differently, and looked upon the system as very good. I ask you this: You are spending millions in improving the land—in making railways, and roads, and bridges over comparatively unsettled land: if you buy for the public at a fair price, will not the public get the benefit of those improvements? And if private individuals buy these lands, ought they not to make the improvements on them? I do not care what the verdict of the House is. I say, if the Government recedes from the policy of purchasing land, they will not be in office next year. I am sure the money spent in that way is well spent. The honorable gentleman asks us, "What about those sales in Auckland?" and tells us that, although about 300,000 acres had been purchased by the Government there, only a very small quantity had been disposed of by them during the last twelve months. One would think, from the way the honorable gentleman spoke, that all that land had vanished, and had gone to sea. Have we not got the land there still as value for our money? Then we are told that this land cannot become of sufficient value to pay the cost of it. I say the time will come when every acre will be of value; but there is a section of people in the country who would like to buy it up now for a song, in order to hold it until the good times come. I admit, when I came into office, my intention was to give up the land-purchase system; but I found the negotiations going on were so extensive, and public feeling was so strongly in favour of the system, that I determined to ask my colleagues to indorse my proposal to keep the system up. I admit we went into these large transactions; and I am proud and rejoice that we have been able to bring more land under negotiations during the last year than our predecessors were able to do in five years. My honorable friend says it will cost a million to complete these negotiations. And if it does, I say that if you can get 5,000,000 acres of land for £1,000,000 you will do very well. I tell this Government now in office, which calls itself the people's Government, the Liberal Government, the Constitutional Government, that if they adopt a policy which will lead to the Native lands being scrambled for by private persons they will not long enjoy the confidence of the people. It amuses me, when I look at those honorable gentlemen, to remember their action in 1876, when the Bill was brought in by an honorable gentleman in another place, and to compare that action with their words now. To hear them talk of selling these Native lands by public auction! Why, the greater part of this North Island would very soon

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be swept up by a few individuals. My honorable friend is a reasonable man; he acts fairly with his colleagues, and takes the accounts they give him: but I can assure him that if the land is disposed of under a policy of that kind he can very soon close his Land Purchase Department, for it will not be wanted. There are plenty of people in the North Island ready to snap up this land; and, if you do not take steps to prevent them, the public will suffer, while a section will blossom from small capitalists into large speculators. I am ready to stand up in this place, to say it inside and outside this House, to declare it in town and country, that if this were made a question on which a dissolution was granted there is not a constituency in this Island who would not demand that the present policy should be continued. There are, no doubt, people who desire to acquire large blocks of land at a low price. I do not blame them so long as the law allows them; but the great grievance they have against me is, that I altered the law so that they could not get it. But to throw up my friends in order to favour my enemies would be a nice thing to do. We made one invariable rule in this respect, with a single exception, to which I shall allude, and in which the notorious name of "Jones," of fell omen, is mixed up. When we came into office we found that some settlers were living in the King country, up to which period no Europeans had been allowed to settle in that part as Europeans—only as pakeha-Maoris. They had gone to expense in getting things on the land, they had opened a store, and were proposing to lease the land for twenty-one years. What they had done then was instrumental in opening up the land; and the Government—as I think, fairly and rightly—in recognition of the services they had rendered, said, "We will not object to the transaction; we will allow you to carry it out, and we will help you in getting the land surveyed." That was all done fairly and above-board. There was nothing secret about it. There was no attempt to make a covert bargain. The whole agreement is to be found on the public records, and, if I am to be hanged if found guilty, and am only given a fair trial, let me be tried on that charge. When compensation to European purchasers is talked about, I say that, if the late Government is entitled to fair consideration upon one point more than another, it is that they have declined to make any unfair bargains. In every instance where we have been compelled to pay money in compensation, we have cut the amount down to the lowest possible price. When claims have been made against us we have always declined to hear them, and have told the claimants that they must come to this House with their grievances. Sir, too much importance cannot be attached to the theory laid down by the honorable gentleman, to the effect that we should look at these things from the present point of view. Because a state of depression now exists, because there is a scarcity of money, because there is a cessation of immigration, because men cannot find employment, and because in consequence of all these causes land has gone back in value, we must take the condition of the money market as

an argument for not buying land at all. I say that, so soon as the Government declare their intention not to buy land, a number of those very gentlemen who profess to take such a gloomy view of the future, and who foretell that in a few years the colony will be in a bankrupt state, will be the very first to go round the country and mop up all the choice blocks. The deep gullies and fearful cliffs to which my honorable friend referred will then become freehold property. In respect to the particular block which he mentioned, it is its misfortune to be covered with bush. But I have yet to learn that bush in itself is a bad thing. Timber is very useful for firewood, for building houses, and for export; and when the timber is cut down it may perhaps be found that those dreadful hills are worth something. With these facts in view, many people will go up there, will cut down the timber, and run the risk of the soil being washed away. They—the honorable gentleman's friends—have no idea of buying for themselves, but they think the country must be opened up for settlement; and if it should happen by accident that they get four times what they paid for the land, it is not their fault. One part of the honorable gentleman's Statement appeared to me somewhat unfair, if he will pardon me for using the term. He appeared to blame the Land Purchase Department for a fault which was not theirs. We had a statement of the land bought and handed over to the Waste Lands Boards, and of the amount sold, the implication being that the Land Purchase Department was responsible for the non-sale of those lands. We know as a matter of fact that as soon as the Government purchases a piece of land, it is handed over to the Waste Lands Board, and, once there, the Government have no further control over it. What I should like to see in the North Island is the abolition of those Boards, and a Minister of the Crown made responsible for the sale of the land. I do not say that that should be done in the South Island, because the conditions there are different; but in this Island I would abolish those Boards, which are irresponsible bodies, and which for years past have been composed of certain favoured individuals, to the exclusion of others. I have no fear that the great bulk of the country will not be taken up. It may be that the sales at present are few, but a time will come when we shall have a population in this country which will take up every acre, unless in the meantime we neglect our duty and our true interests by allowing this land to be bought up, not by the population of the colony, but by half a dozen people who will sell for us. I will not discuss the question of the price of those blocks of land. The honorable gentleman, it appears to me, is on the horns of a dilemma. He blames me for personal government, and he blames me for want of personal government. I understood him to complain that the land bought by Mr. Booth is not worth one-third of what was given for it. Well, what could a person in my position do? If I employ a person of the highest character, whose attempted removal from office formed the burden of Opposition complaints during the last

two sessions, am I not justified in saying to him, "Buy at what you believe to be a fair price"? Am I to be blamed because I have not had an opportunity of personally going over every acre of the country? That would be personal government with a vengeance. If I have officers whom I trust, if they and others advise me that the price paid is a fair value, and that the land is good, it is not a fair charge to bring against me that the land has been bought too dearly. If I have been misinformed, let the honorable gentleman remove Mr. Booth again, and let those honorable gentlemen who took his part last session take his part again. I admit that the devices of private purchasers are very various, and some of them very deep indeed, and there have been cases, I confess, in which I found evidence of the fact that persons have got up what I may term mock negotiations for the purpose of getting money. But you cannot help that. I believe hundreds of people did the same thing under the old Government. All you can do is to trust your officers, take their opinions about the value of the land, and make a fair arrangement as far as possible. Suppose I refused in some cases to pay compensation, it would be said at once that it was an attempt to jump upon those people, when they had made a fair negotiation with the Natives, when they had placed surveyors on the land, and when they believed they could obtain the land. It seems to me that you cannot please the party any way. If you decline to allow private parties to buy, you are jumped upon. If you allow them to buy, and if you exercise your own right to buy, you are jumped upon again. The honorable gentleman said that when we came into office Native affairs were in a peaceful condition. That is a statement which it would take a day to argue. It simply amounts to this: that after 1869, and the terrible wars of the previous five or six years, Native affairs were not in a peaceful condition, but in a quiescent condition. We had killed so many of them, we had driven so many away and put them in prison, we had taken away from them so much land, that they thought better of it, and remained quiet for a time. As a matter of fact, at that time the agitation now complained of was abroad. The Natives were complaining all over the country—on the West Coast of unfulfilled Government promises; on the East Coast of badly-executed Acts of this House. North, south, east, and west, there were heaps of broken and unfulfilled promises. We are told that at that time we had broken down the isolation which had existed for years before. What proof is there of that? Can the honorable gentleman give a single instance of overtures made by the Maoris? As a matter of fact, there had been no advances of that kind made. All that had happened of course I admit was in accordance with my own feelings, because the most important point of all was to preserve the peace of the country. And no man should take action likely to endanger peace. So far, I have not a word to say against my friends on the opposite side, and those in office in 1877. I am glad my honorable friend is good enough to admit for himself that I had no part in making Te Whiti

a madman and a fanatic. Other people have held a different opinion. For months past I have been accused of having put him in his present condition, of making a madman of him, and of having caused him to put forth a false religion. I admit that Te Whiti is a madman, but I feel sure that, if you only manage him properly, there is no danger to the peace of the country in that district. The honorable gentleman blamed us because, for some months past, we had not taken any action on the West Coast, because we had not taken up the Maoris who attempted to commit murder at the Thames, and because we had not arrested the Natives concerned in the affair in the Ngapuhi country. Beyond the general reason which I have given, there is another and a better reason from a party point of view. I am stating a fact known to some honorable gentlemen when I say that when we met Parliament last session we were prepared to take action to put an end to the West Coast difficulty. But we were arrested by a vote of want of confidence on the Address, and we felt bound, having been defeated on that motion, and being sent to the country on a dissolution, to act fairly by our possible successors in office, and not let them meet Parliament with a Maori war. What is more, it is probable that a certain high authority, in whose hands the power lay, would not have allowed us to take that action. But, even supposing that we had had his full consent, it would have been unfair, after having been beaten on a want-of-confidence motion, to take action which might endanger the peace of the country. For these reasons only we allowed these things to pass by. Honorable gentleman tell us that they have a majority of the House. As an evidence of that fact, let them take action in this matter. But I do trust that whatever action they take will be characterized by the utmost caution, and, if they intend to act decisively and promptly, that they will do so with an efficient force. For my part, I would like to see them try the experiment of sending up one of the new Maori Ministers, to see what he could do. I have often heard it said that it is a mistake to endeavour to make terms with the King's people. Now, let us understand distinctly that that is the policy of the Government and the policy of the House. We have been endeavouring to convince the King Natives that it is a mistake for them to continue to live in a state of isolation. We have been endeavouring to convince them that they should make an alteration in the present mode of living, and should open up roads and railways. How can we consistently set up on our side the very same state of isolation that we have condemned on the part of the Natives? I say we are entitled to deal with the King Natives in the same way as with Europeans. If there were twelve thousand Europeans living in violation of the law, refusing to allow the law to be administered within their boundaries, would the House say that we should leave them alone, and should not endeavour to make them obey the law? Certainly the House would not say such a thing. While I admit that we should not press on matters too rashly, at the same time it is a good thing to keep up

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communication and friendly relations with the King Natives, and if possible induce them once and for all to return from the condition of things into which they were driven by the Waikato war in 1863. As I said before, my honorable friend admits that I am not to blame for the fact that Te Whiti is a madman, and that I found him mad. I might go further, if I liked, now, and point out that there is method in his madness, and that many people are now backing up Te Whiti who, until two or three years ago, were perfectly loyal and staunch, upon the express ground that the promises that had been made with regard to grants of land had not been fulfilled. On the Waimate Plains these promises do not exist, but on the settled portions of the country there have been promises made which have not been fulfilled. Is it not a fact that a Commissioner was sent up to settle those claims—a man who was dismissed from the public service for embezzling money—a man who has been accused of worse crimes—a man who is now undergoing sentence for forgery in the Wanganui Gaol? What did he do? He took a person with him, and selected a piece of good land, and said to the Natives, "If you do not take 10s. an acre for it, I shall put you back into the bush." The same thing has occurred in many instances. Honorable gentlemen on the Government benches will find out that in many cases indeed the grossest misconduct has taken place, and that pledges have been violated in such a manner as to be a disgrace to the colony. The honorable gentleman was good enough to refer to the Thames difficulty. I agree with his view of it—that no hasty action should be taken. As I mentioned yesterday, that difficulty did not originate from the survey of the railway line; it did not arise out of any land transaction of the late Government. It was a transaction begotten by our predecessors, and carried out upon the representation that the title of the Natives was good. With regard to the Bay of Islands matter, the honorable gentleman said it could be easily settled in a Court of law. There was no provision by which such a title could be brought into a Court of law. Let me say this, first of all, with regard to personal government: The Native difficulty at the Thames was a survey matter; the Bay of Islands affair was also a survey matter. Under the regulations of 1873 all these survey questions were settled out of my office. I had nothing to do with them; they were dealt with by a different department altogether. When it was determined to buy land for the public, the Survey Department sent their own men to do the work of survey. In this particular case it was a private transaction, and not a Government transaction at all. Unless I were a universal policeman, and carried personal government to a greater extent than even the honorable gentleman pointed out, I could not deal by anticipation with a family quarrel between two sections of the Bay of Islands Natives respecting a particular survey or boundary. Sir, let the honorable gentleman make inquiries, and he will find that the Government had no knowledge of the dispute. He will find that the two

persons who fired off guns had no intention of causing a disturbance. I do not wish to refer to the matter as others have done—that it was a case of a few men going out for sport in the shooting season. I regard the act as a violation of the law. Take up the Home papers and see the acts of violence that are committed in Great Britain day after day. Because a man shoots his neighbour in Ireland on account of some dispute between them, is the Government to be held responsible? You cannot help such things occurring here. No amount of foresight, no amount of legislation, and no amount of bad government, I may say, will prevent them. The honorable gentleman usually speaks logically, and always well; but when he argued that the personal mode of government had to do with the Native difficulty he forgot this fact: that his whole argument went to show that Native government has been personal government from the start. The honorable gentleman proposes to abolish the Native Department. It could not have been personal government, in my case, that brought about the difficulty. It may be the result of the action of personal government before my time. So far as we were concerned, our administration did not give rise to these outrages.

Mr. BRYCE.—I did not say it was solely the outcome of the late Government.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The honorable gentleman tells us of a proposal to abolish the Native Department. I say that that is buncombe of the very purest possible kind. I tell him that if he could bring a law into the House this session to make the dark-skinned Maoris white, to make them talk only the English language, and to abolish their tribal rights, then he might abolish the department, but not before. He would have the Native schools and other matters transferred to the Education Department and other departments. The outcome of such a proposal would be twenty Native Departments instead of one. You would have the work of the Native Department done in different departments, and the heads of departments very possibly pursuing a different course about the same matter. Such a proposal is absurd. So long as these people continue to hold their land under tribal rights, so long as they speak their own language, you must have a special department, govern it as you may. You may reduce the expenditure, you may alter the institution itself, but, in point of fact, you must have a department to which the Maori people, speaking only the Maori language, will be able to apply. What will happen in a case of this kind, should the proposal of the honorable member be carried out? A Maori writes to the Native Minister regarding a school. The Minister replies, in a month's time, in the usual "red-tape" course of these things, "I have referred this question to the Minister of Education,"—who, in his turn, writes stating that he has referred it to some other officer. It would amount, finally, to injustice and to want of good government. With regard to the Survey Department, you certainly cannot remove the officers of that department. You may transfer them, if you like. I believe the stopping of the survey of the Waimate Plains was caused by the

survey of the block being in the hands of that department. The survey party made the mistake of taking the line right through Titokowaru's garden, and this led to the removal of the surveyors. I do not know whether my honorable friend will undertake the task he proposes. He is now in very good health. If he tries it during the recess, I should like him to do it; but I fear we should have to give him a public funeral. The task would involve his own existence. The thing is absolutely impossible. You may cloak it as you like, but, in point of fact, the Native Department must exist till such time as the Native people are prepared to enter into the same state of things as ourselves. My honorable friend has pointed out his views about the Native schools. He has always done so; it is no new idea with him. I come now to the Native Land Bill. I entirely agree with the honorable gentleman's views upon it. It happens to be our Bill, which we had printed in English and Maori. It also happens to be the measure sketched by the late Premier in the previous session, and put before the people of Auckland at a public meeting by me. I do not say this in any way as an accusation against the honorable gentleman. He comes down and proposes a most important measure, which is that of his predecessors in office.

Mr. HALL.—The measure of Sir Julius Vogel.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Not the same measure. Although it is the same in principle, in several important points it entirely differs.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Sir William Martin.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Well, I go back to the period of 1843 and 1844. I believe Sir William Martin should have the credit of this measure, as he fought for years to get it before the public. I do not see how the honorable gentleman can say this measure was begotten by him. I do not blame him for bringing it forward, having found it all ready in his department. If the House is willing to pass a measure of the kind sketched forth by the honorable gentlemen and ourselves—if the House will pass a law which will give to the Maoris the choice of selling their land to the Government, if they like; of selling it at public auction, and under proper conditions—I shall vote for it heartily. I believe the Maori people will take advantage of such a measure. I do not care whether the honorable gentleman remains in office or not, if he brings that measure forward he may depend upon having all the support I can possibly give him in passing it into law. The Bill is not the property of the present Government; it is our common property. I protest against my honorable friend's doctrine, that one man should not have the power of spending money. Of course, as between that man and this House, he is not the only person responsible. We know very well that the Minister would, in all important questions, take the advice of the Cabinet—that he would naturally do so on such important points as the honorable gentleman referred to.

Major ATKINSON.—Not naturally.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Well, no doubt the honorable gentleman gets on very pleasantly with his Premier. I will not refer to that any further at

present. If I might go further, without being wishful to offend either my honorable friend or the Premier, I would say, if a change in the Government took place, I should like to see the honorable gentleman in the position of Premier, as the person best entitled to be so, having held that position before in this House.

Mr. HALL.—They settled it among themselves.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The honorable gentleman says “they settled it among themselves.” I have no doubt of that. They have done so. Why, we do not know; how, we do not know. The fact remains that it has been settled. We shall hear more perhaps by-and-by. I really am ashamed to take up the time of the House so long. I am speaking under considerable difficulty, because, like my honorable friend opposite, I cannot speak for an hour and a half without suffering from the exertion. But there are one or two other matters I should like to refer to before sitting down. First of all, I would point out to him, with regard to his new measure for Native lands, one thing which will simply kill the whole measure. If I meant to be ungenerous I might keep the fact to myself. His proposal is this: to survey the lands, to put them up to auction under the existing land law of the district, making provision for public reserves, for school reserves, and for other public purposes, and taking, also, the right to lay down lines of road and railway. That is perfectly fair. But, if the honorable gentleman means to deduct the cost of opening roads and constructing public works in the block—if that is to be a charge upon the owner of the land; and if, then, you are to hand over the balance to him—

Mr. BRYCE.—The honorable gentleman is not quite correct. I said, deduct a percentage, not deduct the whole cost.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Even then, I say, if you are going to deduct a percentage of that cost, I do not think the owners of the land will have a very large balance to take away. I have seen the operation performed once or twice before by the Government. It somehow happens, when they have the power to put these expenses on the Native people, that, by the time the land has gone through their hands, and everybody has handled the money, a very small amount remains. I say plainly that I would sooner see the colony pay for the survey—pay for the whole cost—for it is better for us to have a Crown title for the whole of the land in the Island than to leave it as it remains now. It would be money cheaply spent, and the results would largely pay for the expenditure, while you would secure the land being cut up into a proper size and under proper conditions, and the increase in the land revenue which would ensue, and the additions to the population, would warrant the expense. I hope the honorable gentleman will consent to that proposition, and make some provision whereby the Native people may be induced to bring their land for sale under the waste land laws without having imposed upon them the whole of the cost. Look at the difference? At the present time there is not a single penny of taxation from these lands. Under this

system, in a few months' time, the greater portion would come under taxation, and the people who would occupy it would add to the Customs revenue and assist in making good that deficiency we have heard so much about during the last few days. Now, I would like to refer to the charge against the department of having spent so much of the vote under “Contingencies.” I admit that is a fair question for debate, and that the Government have a perfect right to make use of it as an argument against myself and against the party to which I belong. But, Sir, it is too big a question to take up in the course of the present debate. I should myself require at least a couple of hours to go into that. I will only point out to the House now that, while there has been an excess of expenditure, still you have got to look at this fact: that the greater portion was incurred in the attempt made—with the approval of the country—to endeavour to settle the Maori King question, to open up that country to occupation, and to connect the North and the South of this Island; that, in the second place, a large portion of it is money which might have been fairly charged—in fact, if I knew then as much about the thing as I do now, it would have been charged—to land purchases. The greater portion, in fact, is a charge of that kind. And I go beyond that when I say this: that if you are to discuss that question I would ask the House to have side by side that return of last year and the return of the last five years, and see how the public money was dealt with them. When I came into office we had a vote of £3,000. There was a sum of £5,000 on the estimates for what was called “Defence.” I allowed that to go from the department altogether, and I found afterwards that it had always been used as a sort of necessary by the Native Minister for the purpose of helping him to swell out the ordinary votes. Secondly, it will be seen, if reference is made to these tables of the last five or six years past, that a great deal of what is now charged on that vote which shows the excess was then charged upon loan; and, thirdly, I say further that if you are to carry on the land-purchase system, and do it successfully, you will require to increase that vote even very much more, because at the present time you are compelled to fee the people who attend your Land Courts. I will take the case of Cambridge as an illustration in point. At the Court which was held there, there were some hundreds of thousands of acres of land to go through. The Court lasted over four months at a stretch. The people were there for months, waiting from day to day for their cases to be called on, and were all that time living on their means; and the Government had either to send these people away and have no Court, or pay them for stopping there. Of course it is taken into account in the payment for the land, and properly so; and I believe that, although it may appear to be a large charge, the result will amply repay the expenditure. However, I suppose we shall hear more of this particular question, and then the House will have a chance of going into these accounts and seeing how it has arisen. For my part, I am quite prepared to accept any

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inquiry that may be proposed. Now, I would like to say one or two words in conclusion. If there is one thing which would reconcile me to the change of Government, it is that the honorable gentleman who is now there in my position holds that place. I have been with him on the Native Affairs Committee for the last five or six years, and I have observed that in all cases he has given the most patient hearing and the fairest possible trial to the petitions coming before that Committee. And I think he will say for me that in that Committee, on many occasions when I might have taken an advantage and pulled off a thing by a side-wind, I have preferred to have the matter fought out fairly in the Committee.

Mr. BRYCE.—Hear, hear. I said so in the House.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—And, although I have held office, and although I have committed all these high crimes and misdemeanours, I repeat that, so far as I am personally concerned, the transaction to me has been an absolute personal loss. If I have been accused of one thing by my own party, it is this: that, in conducting Government business, I have recognized no man for a friend or an enemy—I have met him entirely on his merits. Now that my honorable friend has assumed the rôle of Native Minister, he is compelled necessarily, in defending his own position, to attack mine. This is a fair and proper right, and it has been exercised, I must admit, in a straightforward manner this evening. But I can warn him of this: When he tries to carry out the reforms he has spoken of, when he attempts to reduce the expenditure to which he has referred, and when he attempts to do these things which we are blamed for not doing, he has trouble cut out for him. Let us see now what will happen. If there be anything which has brought down the feeling of the country on the Native Department, it is the West Coast business: let him take Te Whiti. If there is anything that has done harm to the late Government, it is the Thames business: let him capture those prisoners. Another thing is the Bay of Islands business: let him settle that difficulty. We shall see now what will be the effect of the change. I am quite sure the honorable gentleman will follow exactly in the course I have taken, and will proceed cautiously and carefully, and will hesitate a long time, and consider every proceeding, before taking any single step which may have the effect of leading to loss of life or of imperilling the peace of the country. Sir, so far as I am concerned, I may say this: There is a party struggle impending—if we could get that disposed of it would be a very good thing, but it must come off some time—and when that struggle is over, if it results in continuing the honorable gentleman on those benches I can assure him of this fact: He will find that so long as the Government is carrying on its work, and until a proper time comes again on some other occasion to test the question, I will give him every possible assistance I can; because I hold that, if a man were to allow himself for party purposes to put the Government for the time being into a corner on the Maori question, that

man would not be doing his duty as a member of this House; and on no consideration whatever, no matter what may happen, after we have had our final fight, shall I be found opposing my honorable friend in doing what he considers best to help us out of our difficulties; and I trust the time will never come when the Maori question will be made a party question so as to turn a Government out of office. I beg to thank the House for the hearing it has given me. The subject has been too large for me to deal with wholly and effectually; but I have no doubt that in the course of the debate, and of debates to come on afterwards, the points between the honorable gentleman and myself which I have not been able to discuss more fully than I have done will come up again, and we shall both be heard, and the House can then judge between us.

Major ATKINSON.—I confess that the speech we have just heard has disappointed me very much. The honorable gentleman appears to me either to have failed altogether to confront the speech of my honorable friend the Native Minister, or to have made no attempt whatever to answer it. It is impossible to escape one of these two conclusions. What my honorable friend endeavoured to put before the House was this: that personal government, in the special sense of control being taken from this House, was to be deprecated in Native matters as in others. The late Native Minister thereupon argued that every Minister governed under what he termed personal government. Now, there is no doubt at all that there is a vast distinction between the way in which the Native Minister spent and handled money and the way in which any other Minister has expended money. That is the point which my honorable friend wished to bring specially under the notice of this House—that it should not be the duty of a Native Minister to be perpetually receiving and attending to such telegrams as the honorable gentleman received—telegrams, as we were told, asking for sums varying in amount from ten-and-sixpence to a million of money. There is no doubt that a large portion of the Native Minister's time is taken up by frivolous applications of this sort; and it is that kind of government which my honorable colleague, and, I believe, this House, desires to put an end to—not at all that the Native Minister should not exercise his functions as a Minister of the Crown. There is one thing in the honorable gentleman's speech which I think must have struck this House; and it has often occurred, and repeatedly occurs, when fault is found with the late Government—namely, that the moral standard which those honorable gentlemen set up, by which they wish to be judged, is the conduct of the Government that was turned out of office in 1877. Now, that seems to me a very curious fact. A Government which the honorable gentlemen opposite were never tired of abusing, and which they accused of high crimes and misdemeanours of every possible description, is now referred to by them, and they consider it a sufficient answer to any charge to say that the late Government, or some Government between 1870 and 1877, did as bad or worse. To my mind,

that is no answer at all. This House wants to know whether a thing is right or wrong. The late Government came into office undertaking to cure all these evils the colony was suffering from; and therefore to refer back as a standard to the acts of the Government which preceded them does not seem to me a very satisfactory proceeding at the present time. The honorable gentleman has said that we, who are sitting on these benches now, are the supporters of personal government. Well, I do not know exactly what the honorable gentleman means. I was trying to follow him, but I failed in this as in some other points. He referred to what was the position of affairs in 1875. Now, there is no doubt at all, Sir, that after those years of war and distress great latitude was given to the Native Minister; but I challenged the honorable gentleman on more occasions than one when he has made the same statement he makes now—when he said that we had hundreds of pounds in those days to his one pound—I challenged the honorable gentleman to show that in any one particular we had more money than he had. The honorable gentleman entirely failed to meet me. On one occasion when the honorable gentleman made that statement I showed that on every item the Grey Government had as much money as the Government under Sir Donald McLean. I am prepared to argue that point out with the honorable gentleman whenever he likes. In 1875 we made great strides towards reducing the expenditure of this department. We made away with all permanent votes except the Civil list, and brought all the expenditure before Parliament in a manner in which it had never been brought under its notice previously. And steadily, until 1877, when we were turned out of office, that course was pursued. But since 1877 we have relapsed—gone back to the very worst days when unlimited power was given to Ministers. It is no answer at all to say that we were worse or as bad in any of the years before 1875. Then, Sir, I was very sorry at a remark which the honorable member made and dwelt upon—sorry, because he was very unfair. The honorable gentleman knew that my honorable friend the Native Minister did not take up the position which the honorable member for the Thames tried to instil into the minds of the Maori members. He represented the Native Minister as dealing unfairly with the Natives, as not listening to them as he would to Europeans. Now, the whole of the Native Minister's argument was that they should be dealt with as Europeans, and treated exactly like them. He never proposed to hand them over to underlings, under secretaries, or junior clerks. He said, Let them be treated in a similar way to Europeans; but do not permit the Native Minister, out of necessity of his office, to be—if I may use the expression—"mobbed," not only in his office, but in his private residence, and in the streets, night and day. The whole question, Sir, which my honorable friend the Native Minister tried to bring under the notice of the House was, that Parliament should have control of the expenditure, and that the Natives should be treated as Euro-

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peans, where it was possible to treat them so. The speech of the late Native Minister was a little discursive. In connection—although it did not follow immediately after—with this question of Maoris being treated like Europeans, the late Native Minister was very eloquent upon our duty to employ the Native youths of this country; and then he made the statement that there was not a single under secretary who would take a Maori youth, except in the Native Department and the Printing Office. I have yet to learn that in questions of this sort it is the under secretaries who have to decide this matter. Some little time ago a great cry was raised to the effect that the country was not going to be governed by under secretaries; yet I am now told that the under secretaries, in the meting-out a fair portion of the public service to the Native race and to Europeans, are to do exactly what they please. I confess I am very much surprised that honorable gentlemen who have made a settlement of this Native question a speciality should permit themselves to be frustrated in the important work they were doing by under secretaries. I confess that I feel very anxious about these Maori youths. It seems to me a very unfortunate thing to bring them down and half-employ them. That is no kindness to the race. If the Maori youths are to be employed in the Civil Service—and I should like them so employed—it should be settled in Cabinet how many youths are to be employed, and what departments they are to be attached to. Of course they should be subject to the necessary examination to insure fitness for the service in which they would be placed. I believe a great unfairness was done to the permanent officers, when the late Native Minister said that no secretary would receive these Maori youths, implying that it was a prejudice of race which influenced them in the matter. Regarding the Native land purchases, here also the late Native Minister seemed to deal very unfairly with the statement of my honorable colleague (Mr. Bryce). The argument of my honorable friend was this: that, as far as our experience went to show, the expenditure of something like three-quarters of a million of money had neither proved a profitable commercial transaction, nor had it advanced the settlement of the country. And then my honorable friend the member for the Thames, in order to answer this, said, "But you have only to keep it long enough, and it is there to be profitable." That is no answer at all, because what my honorable colleague pointed out was that a great deal of this land cannot be settled for generations—it is not of a sufficiently good quality for settlement; and, if we take from £30,000 to £40,000 as interest and add it on to the capital invested in the acquisition of this land, we shall soon see what sort of a commercial transaction it will be. The reason that it has not been sold is no reason why the Government was not responsible for buying such land. The true reason that the land has not been sold is, that it is unfit for settlement. If it had been fit for settlement, no doubt the Waste Lands Boards would have been only too glad to sell it. The late Native Minister

says—and glories in it, he tells us—that “We have purchased more land within the last twelve months than the late Government did in four or five years.” That is true; because the late Government declined to purchase a large number of blocks of land, for the simple reason that they considered them unfit for settlement and incapable of being used for some generations to come. All this land could have been easily bought by the previous Government—by the honorable member for Clive—for one-fourth the price paid for it by the Ministry which has just gone out of office. We had not unlimited money; we had not an unlimited power of borrowing; we knew we had very nearly run our limit for some time to come; and we knew that putting money in land meant the taking of it away from public works. The purchase of these lands by the Grey Government will neither advance the settlement of the country nor become a profitable transaction. I do hope that before this House rises it will go into the question of land purchases, and will not permit any Minister to glory in buying hundreds of thousands of acres of worthless land, and spending nearly a million of money in purchasing it. Then, Sir, we come to that curious lawsuit. I will only remark, upon that, that it seemed to me a most extraordinary thing that the late Native Minister was righteously indignant at the gross injustice that had been done to the Maori people on that occasion. He felt quite ashamed at the action of our Courts in the matter, and I did not know what he was going to do to remedy this injustice; but suddenly the whole of the honorable gentleman's indignation vanished into thin air when he found that the plaintiff and the defendant had come to a compromise. If our Courts are unjust, or if any unfairness has been done, surely it ought not to be settled in such a way as this. I confess I cannot understand that, because a plaintiff and defendant come to a compromise, the honorable member for the Thames can reconcile his conscience with the statement he made. If the case was as the honorable member stated it to be, the defendant ought to have been prosecuted for perjury. Then, Sir, the honorable gentleman referred to another subject. He said, in defence of the issue of a particular promissory note to a particular Maori—the merits of which I do not propose to go into at all—that in the Native Office there was a book of printed forms for that purpose. That is no defence at all. Either the thing was right or it was wrong. The book being there is no proof that it is right. Is this House, in the present state of the finances, prepared to keep a book there, to issue loans to any Native whom the Native Minister thinks worth trusting? My honorable colleague remarked, in connection with this matter, that, if money was to be spent for this purpose, there ought to be a special vote of this House, which ought not to be exceeded. It is no answer to say there is a book in the office containing these printed forms of promissory notes. Now, as to the statement of the late Native Minister about the condition of the Natives. I was never more surprised than when I heard the honorable gentleman state, with all the bold-

ness of a person stating a fact, that it was impossible, until the honorable member for Christchurch City and the Thames became Premier, to get communication with the King or the King Natives.—(Hear, hear.)—I am very glad to hear “Hear, hear.” I was very greatly astonished at such a statement, because the honorable gentleman must have known, or, if he did not, he ought to have known, that it was not a fact. I am going to show that I am speaking by the book. First of all, let me ask what was the general condition of the Natives in 1877. My honorable friend the Native Minister said, at any rate, the position was hopeful at that time. I shall go a little further, and say that the position was very good. It must have been so, since, after the late Native Minister had been in office some eight months, he was able to come down to the House and say that peace had at last been absolutely restored between the two races. Anybody who knows anything of the Natives must know perfectly well that, had not advances towards peace been well on the way, eight months was not sufficient to enable the Government to settle everything. What we find in the Governor's Speech must be true: we must therefore conclude that, within the period of eight months from the advent of the late Government to power, peace had been absolutely established between the two races at last. The honorable gentleman challenged me to say that there had been any communication between the King people and the outside world before he came into office. Now, the first instance I will give is the case the honorable gentleman gave—that of Mr. Joshua Jones, of Mokau. Mr. Jones of Mokau had been living there with his friends for some twelve or eighteen months before the honorable gentleman came into office; so that, absolutely, while he was telling us that there had been no communication with the Maori King people, he knew perfectly well that Mr. Joshua Jones had been living there, and, moreover, had obtained from the King a lease of between twenty-five thousand and fifty thousand acres of land—the exact area was not known, but it embraced all the flat around the River Mokau, including the coal and lime—for twenty-one years. That incident alone would have at once answered the honorable gentleman, when he said there had been no means of communication. The country had actually been settled by Europeans, who had got a lease of this land from Te Wetera for twenty-one years. There is one fact for the honorable gentleman, and the honorable gentleman knew that fact perfectly well. With regard to direct communication with the King himself, I might say that these gentlemen were in regular communication with Rewi and other leading members of the Ngatimaniapoto Tribe. I am not going to trouble the House with many extracts, but those honorable gentlemen who are new to the House will find, in the Appendix to the Journals for 1875, G.-4, a report of the visit of Sir Donald McLennan in that year to the King country. Sir Donald McLennan had a letter directly inviting him to go up to see the King, and honorable gentlemen will see, in the papers to which I refer,

the position he took up. It was a position entirely different from that taken up by Ministers at the late Native meeting. Sir Donald McLean, being invited, went up, and was received by the Natives with all due honor. He met Tawhiao, who afterwards went to his tent. Some of the Native chiefs came to him and pressed him to go up and visit Tawhiao in his tent; but he said, "I am the visitor. It is Tawhiao's duty to come and visit me." And Tawhiao did so. What are we to understand from the tenor of this report? I am not going to read many extracts, but there is just one quotation I should like to give as to what Tawhiao says—"Do not suppose this is to be your last visit up here. No, it is not. The oftener you come up here to see us the better." These were the words of Tawhiao, and I would ask honorable gentlemen whether it is possible to reconcile that with the statement made by the late Native Minister, that no communication was held between the King country and the Government, and that it was impossible to approach his Majesty until those honorable gentlemen occupied the Treasury benches.

Mr. LUNDON.—The honorable member for the Thames said there was one occasion.

Major ATKINSON.—No: he said somebody had gone up for six weeks to the Waikato—that he had seen Tawhiao, shaken hands with him, and came away in a state of great delight. That was the statement of the late Native Minister. He said nothing of Sir Donald McLean's visit to the King. He said somebody crawled up. He said nothing to the effect that, when Sir Donald McLean arrived there, the King's leading men, and not friendly Natives, pressed him to come up and visit the King. I would ask, would any honorable gentleman who heard what the late Native Minister said judge that when Sir Donald McLean went up he met the King, and that the King, with all ceremony, went to pay him a visit in his tent? No one could have come to such a conclusion from the statement of the late Native Minister. There are many other subjects to which I might refer; but I will not trouble the House further now. I know honorable gentlemen opposite do not like me to go on. They do not like the things I am saying. Such things are not pleasing to them. I was only going to say this: that there was one statement which I listened to with great surprise, and that was the statement with regard to what the honorable gentleman opposite intended to do on the West Coast. He told us that when the last vote of want of confidence was coming on the Government had a scheme to settle the difficulty, and that, if that vote had not been gone on with, we should now have been in a Maori war. I confess I did not know what the honorable member meant by that. He told us distinctly he had made arrangements, and that if that vote had not been gone on with—he did not consider it fair to his successors to leave them in a Maori war—we should have been in a Maori war. I confess I do not know what he meant when he said that; but he did say it, quite distinctly; and he added that he had intended to act with a large force. I do not know that I ever heard so weak a speech

on an occasion when he might have risen above the notion of a personal attack. He might have given us excellent advice, and the result of the valuable experience he must have gained during the last two years.

Mr. THOMSON.—I think the speech we have just heard is really a little disappointing, especially as a reply to the speech that the late Native Minister favoured us with. I think that was by no means a weak speech. It was a noble speech. I consider that the late Native Minister defended himself nobly against all the charges that have been made against him. The honorable member who has just sat down has told us that the late Native Minister made no attempt to answer the speech of the present Native Minister. Now, I consider that the late Native Minister took one point after another, dealt with them, and set all the charges that had been made on one side. I think that the Native Minister made a very fair speech; but I suspect that on one or two occasions he endeavoured to score a point rather unjustly against the late Ministry. For example, he read us a telegram which he told us was a fair specimen of a hundred and fifty telegrams which come each day to the Native Office. I think that must really be exaggerated.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honorable member has misapprehended me. I said it was a fair specimen of a number of telegrams that came in—it was a specimen of a class.

Mr. THOMSON.—I do not think, from what the late Native Minister has told us, that it is a fair specimen of a class. Does the honorable gentleman mean to say that telegrams were coming in every day from Native chiefs who had erected large houses on their lands, asking for money to pay for those houses, amounting to £2,000? I believe that is altogether an unusual case, and I cannot but think that the honorable gentleman went to an extreme length on that point. Then he told us of the very extravagant way in which a sum of £35,000 was spent in the Native districts. It appears that this money has chiefly been spent through the counties. I do not believe in the county system. I never did believe in it, and I do not think I ever shall believe in it. The honorable gentlemen who sit on those benches were, in a great measure, instrumental in thrusting this system upon the country; yet they come down and tell us that these County Councils are not fit to be trusted with the expenditure of a sum of £35,000 in the Native districts. I thought that the Native Minister was likely to score a point in the case of the purchase of Native lands. I was sorry to hear that the land at Wanganui is so very poor. I always understood that Wanganui was a nice place, that it had a fine climate, that it was well watered, and that it consisted of excellent land; but it appears that on these points I have been entirely mistaken; that, in fact, the land at Wanganui is very rough, consisting of very deep gullies; that it is all bush country, worth only 1s. 6d. an acre. I am sorry to hear it. I know that men have gone to that part of the country and paid large prices for their land, and it seems that they have made bad bargains. I think it has been clearly

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shown that the Native land-purchase system was conducted by the late Native Minister as satisfactorily as the difficult character of the work would permit. Then the honorable gentleman has been charged with having instituted what is called personal government, which, we have been told, is the system of spending money without control. What is meant by control? Does it mean that every bag of sugar given to a Native must appear on the estimates? A Government must be trusted to some extent, and if they cannot be trusted they should be turned off the Ministerial benches. As an instance of the personal government of the late Native Minister, we are told that Natives were allowed to go to his house and follow him about the streets; but I suppose they went to his house and followed him about because they had a regard for him. If he was not to be visited by any Natives, what would be the use of having a Native Minister? We have been waiting very patiently during the last few days for the Statement of the Native Minister: we did not want a statement of dry facts, such as we had in the speech of the Colonial Treasurer a few evenings ago. Towards the end of the speech we had a statement of the policy of the Government in regard to Native lands particularly; but, after all, it was merely the policy of the late Government—there was no new feature about it. I think the honorable gentleman gave us the same statement of policy two years ago. It was fresh at that time, and perhaps it has borne fruit. The honorable member was the first whom I heard express the theory that the Government should sell the land by auction in behalf of the Maoris. I think there were no charges, in the strict sense of the word, to answer. We have been waiting for the great revelations that were to be made; and where are they? We were told that "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." This was intended to mean that this side of the House believed that some great disclosures were to be made. It is the Government, however, who have been trying to make people believe that there were to be some astonishing disclosures; but what has it all come to? Absolutely nothing. Some information was laid before the House yesterday with reference to a person of the name of Jones, and the Premier read out the information with great gusto. And this is the great Native Statement that we have all been waiting for.

Major TE WHEORO.—I rise to say a few words with regard to the Statement of the Native Minister. He referred to the difficulties which had arisen through the purchase of Native lands, and I agree with what he said in that respect. But these difficulties were in existence for some time before; they are not things of the present. These troubles commenced when the Maoris sold their land only to the Queen. There were certain lands in the Waikato District which were sold and unfairly bought by the Queen. Twice a surveyor named Mr. Johnson was sent to that part of the country. The difficulty that arose on that occasion was, that one person took the money from the Government, and different persons owned the land. The Waikato chiefs rose up in a body,

and told the officer of the Native Department not to pay the money to these Natives. Through mistakes of this kind occurring in the purchase of Native lands the Maoris resolved not to sell. Through that, they got the name which is generally known throughout the Island, of the people who retain the land; and out of that sprang the King movement. At that time the officers of the department I refer to bought land at Waitara. Te Teira was for selling the land, and Wiremu Kingi was for keeping it. The officers of the Native Department insisted upon that purchase, and through the bad management of those officers came the shedding of blood throughout the Island. They did not listen to the words of Wiremu Kingi. The trouble extended from there to the Waikato, and throughout the Island. After that, this House instituted the Native Land Court. A surveyor was sent to the land of a person named Purukutu. Purukutu turned that surveyor off, and he went to the officers of the Native Land Court, and told the heads of that department. The head of the department gave the land to another Maori, who leased it to a European; then Purukutu rose up and slew the European. Purukutu did not act rightly in killing the man; but the land was Purukutu's, and the officers of the Native Department had no right to give the land to the other Maori. The land troubles have existed from that time down to the present; they have not ceased. There is another thing: what was said to the Maoris in those days by these officers was never fulfilled. The same has been done, I believe, with the Taranaki Natives. Promises have been made there which have never been carried out. The Taranaki Natives went on to the European lands; and the reason they did so was, I think, because those promises were not carried out. That is why they went to plough the lands of the Europeans. How can a Maori express or ventilate his grievance when he is surrounded by the vicious system of the Native Department, whether he turn to the left hand or to the right? Supposing, for instance, we were to surround a cow, and the animal could not get away, would it not jump on one of us? It is the same with man. If a man were hemmed in, and could not justly get what he wanted, he would do the same thing. Year after year the members of this House have been trying to legislate for the Maoris, but every year there are "Maori troubles," "Maori troubles," "Maori troubles." They also say, "Abolish the Native Department." Where is the wrong in the Native Department? It lies with the officers. But let the House decide this: Leave the Native Department to the Maoris, and then see if any wrong will come of it. Why is not this tried, because it has already been seen how it has been carried on by European officers? Let the Maori try the office. The Native Minister has said something about the fearful expense there has been, and of the bringing of the Native children down here to walk about with nothing to do. But that is a matter amongst yourselves. The Native Department is apart from that; it is with the Maoris. I believe that if the House were to act as I have suggested great good would come

of it. Be afraid if no good come of it. Try, and see the result, either one way or the other. Until then you cannot fairly say that the Native Department is not necessary. These words are not my own—that is, to let the Native Department exist—but they come from the Europeans. I believe, if the House will not take my suggestion, the Queen will. There was also something stated this evening about the mode of selling the Native lands, and dealing with them. What I say is, Leave the land to the Maori, and let him sell it or not, as he likes. The first thing I say is, Give the Maori his own land; do not bother him about it; let him sell it of his own accord, if he wishes, but do not urge him to sell it. The Native Minister referred to the negotiations which had been opened up with the King. I believe they had a very good effect. I believe, if the Government had not taken that step, greater would have been the evil consequence than that which took place with regard to Purukutu. The people there have suspended all ideas of hostility through the Government placing before them the whole matter, and through what has taken place during the last two or three years. I think a great deal of good indeed has come of holding meetings in that direction. The good is this: the two sides coming into contact with each other, and talking together. No harm happened through the meetings; but afterwards there were some trifling matters in the proposals made by the Government which Tawhiao objected to, and, while he was thinking over these things, Europeans took the opportunity to prompt him, with the view of increasing whatever difficulties there were at the time. If Tawhiao had been left to consider of his own accord what was placed before him at the time, there would have been no misunderstanding. Even as it is, no trouble has arisen, although it has been said that through the Government going there, and plying Tawhiao with proposals, the trouble has increased. No; it is not so. There is no trouble, no harm whatever. I agree with the Native Minister. He is right in saying that there is no necessity for having an armed force on the frontier of the Waikato. I heard something outside about a vessel going to Taranaki conveying powder. I ask the Native Minister with regard to that, why was that powder taken there? What was the object of taking ammunition? I heard it was sent there for the purpose of being used against Te Whiti. What has Te Whiti done? Te Whiti never came here and took prisoners. It is his people who have been taken prisoners and lodged in gaol. Te Whiti never came here and created a disturbance through his people being imprisoned. I should feel very glad indeed if this House brought in a new measure through which the European race and the Maori race could live happily together. Referring to the late Government and the present Government, I believe that nothing for the good of the Maori will be accomplished here. What have the present Government decided with regard to Henare Tomoana, their friend? What have they given him? What functions have they accorded to him? Henare is simply sitting on his

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seat. The Native Minister has not told us what he is, or what he is possessed of. I do not believe that he has anything extra at all. If the Native Department were transferred to him, I would then believe that some good would come out of it. This House has said a great deal over Native matters generally, but there is one thing they have not done: they have not given the Maori his department—that is, the Native Department. Do not think this is a new kind of trouble that has sprung up at Ohinemuri. It is simply the same as that which occurred in Taranaki through the officers of the department, who are thoroughly ignorant of Maori ideas. Notwithstanding the wrong on the part of those officers, the House turned its wrath on the Maoris, and not on the officers, who are alone to blame. I am inclined to think that, if the honorable member for Egmont had been at the head of the Government when this disturbance took place in Taranaki, shots would have been fired, because I have heard that Major Atkinson was one who brought a Bill into this House providing in a certain degree for those Natives who are in prison, so that they would fare worse than they do now. That is why I think I would like to see no laws referring to these things made in this House. But let us try and bring down some measure by which these troubles could be swept away, and all fighting put down for the future. The present Government, I can see, is the Government which was in existence some time ago, and the works of the late Government were the works of those old Governments. The leader of the present Opposition is a new man. I am a new man myself, and I am going to give him my vote. Perhaps he will do something good for the Maoris.

The House adjourned at a quarter to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 21st October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Reading—Kirwee Telegraph Station—Native Expenditure—Loans—Native Expenditure.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company Bill, Fencing Bill.

SECOND READING.

New Plymouth Gas Company Bill.

KIRWEE TELEGRAPH STATION.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, If the Government are disposed to authorize a telegraph station at the Kirwee Railway Station? Two or three sessions back, he, in company with others, had waited upon the Postmaster-General with a request that this telegraph station might be opened, and received a favourable reply; but nothing had been done towards carrying out the promise. He assured the Hon. the Attorney-General that there would be no difficulty in connecting Kirwee with the telegraphic system. The cost would be very

light, and it would be of great advantage, seeing that four townships—namely, West Milton, Yorktown, Courtenay, and Kimberley—were within a short distance of the centre.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER replied that steps were being taken for the purpose of opening a telegraph station in the place mentioned.

NATIVE EXPENDITURE.

The Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, if the Government will lay on the table of the Council an account, in detail, showing the expenditure of the sum of £7,000 provided in the Civil list for the service of the year 1878-79 for Native affairs?

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER laid the paper on the table.

LOANS.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he thought it was highly important to call the attention of the Council and the public generally to the fact that the cost of negotiating our loans was greatly increasing, and he trusted that the directing of public attention to the fact would lead to a diminution of the charges. Some years ago the cost of raising the loans was something like $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon the amount borrowed, which included the amount paid, according to ordinary custom, to the brokers in connection with forwarding applications for the loan. He believed he was right in stating that the large loan negotiated through Sir William Fitzherbert cost something under $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; but, if honorable members would look at the return lately placed upon the table giving particulars as to the cost of the last loan, they would see that the cost had been $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; so that the amount had tripled in the course of a very few years. He saw that at the present time the colony was paying an entirely new charge of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to the Bank of England. That was done in connection with the Inscription of Stock Act—an Act that seemed to have been carried into effect so far as this payment was concerned, but no further. He was quite satisfied that no appreciable advantage had been derived from that Act in this way, or was likely to be. Further, he observed that, whereas three or four years ago a commission of 1s. 6d. in the £100 was paid to the Crown Agents, these gentlemen now received a commission of 5s. per cent., or more than threefold the amount which had been deemed sufficient only three or four years ago. There was the usual payment of 5s. per cent. to brokers, who were the medium of forwarding applications for bonds; and there was another item, the most peculiar item that he had ever seen in connection with these loans,—

Sept. 4, 1878.—F. A. Scrimgeour, commission 4 5 per cent. for services as brokers up to time of obtaining official quotation of the 10-40 £3,500,000 loan	...	...	£8,750	0	0
Additional brokerage, at $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on £200,000 applied for, as agreed	...	£5,000	0	0	
Less commission paid by the Bank of New Zealand on £960,100	...	2,400	5	0	
			2,599	15	0
			£11,349	15	0

For the life of him he could not understand what that amount had been paid for. He did not speak in ignorance on the point, because he knew the arrangement under which similar transactions were entered into by the Agents-General of other colonies. Mr. Scrimgeour was, he believed, a respectable broker, and a member of a firm who were largely connected with syndicates; but that the last New Zealand loan was not mainly raised through Mr. Scrimgeour he (the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse) knew, for he happened to be in London at the time, and the Hon. Mr. Williamson, who was also in London at the same time, could bear him out in the statement that it was done mainly through the exertions of the Bank of New Zealand. Mr. Scrimgeour appeared to have been a consulting broker, and for his duties in connection with that he had received this large sum of £11,300.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—On what date was it paid?

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—On the 4th of September, 1878: the same time as the other agents were paid. There had been no loans more successfully negotiated than the loans of South Australia, and he was in a position to state in what manner those loans were negotiated. They availed themselves, as the New Zealand Government did, of the services of a consulting broker, and their broker was a gentleman connected with a firm that stood at the very top of the profession in England—a Mr. Marshall, of the firm of Marshall and Mullins, brokers to the Bank of England. These brokers were regularly consulted by the Agent-General of South Australia before he brought any loan whatever into the market, and it would no doubt rather astonish honorable members to hear that for these services the South Australian Government paid only £50 to £100. When the Agent-General of South Australia was telling him (the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse) of the circumstances, he remarked that he could not understand brokers of so high a position devoting their attention to such work for so small a remuneration. The reply was, that that consideration did not influence such brokers for a single moment. The application was regarded as a tribute to their respectability and standing; but the Government got as much attention as if a large sum had been paid. On the same ground, merchants occupying the highest position would trouble themselves to become directors of banks, and devote every energy to the performance of their duty as such for the small remuneration of a guinea or two a sitting, as the case might be. It was not a question of remuneration, but of the tribute to their respectability and worth which was paid by electing them to such positions. Whether the amount paid was too small or not might be a question for consideration; but what he (the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse) wished to call attention to was that, for the same work which was performed by brokers for an insignificant remuneration, the New Zealand Government paid a sum of £11,300. It seemed to him that when persons were dealing with millions they were apt to become lavish. He thought good would be derived from the printing

of this document, inasmuch as public attention would be directed to the matter, and perhaps some steps would be taken to reduce the cost of loans, which, if not called attention to, would continue to swell, as they had swollen in time past.

Motion made, and question put, "That the return showing the expenditure and recoveries under Vote 101, Class XII. (showing the charges and expenses of raising loans), in the year 1878-79, be printed."—(*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*)

Agreed to.

NATIVE EXPENDITURE.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER, in moving the motion standing in his name, said the terms of the motion were sufficiently explicit to render any remarks from him unnecessary, except that he thought it a matter of great public importance that this inquiry should be made.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report generally upon the expenditure during the year ended 30th June, 1879, and for the quarter ended 30th September, 1879, under the votes for Native purposes and Native land purchases; such report to be accompanied by a detailed statement of the whole expenditure for Native purposes during the above-named period, classified in such manner as the Committee may consider desirable, and specifying the vote to which each class of expenditure has been charged. Such Committee to have power to call for persons and papers; and to consist of the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, the Hon. Mr. P. A. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Captain Fraser, and the mover."—(*Hon. Mr. Miller.*)

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL said that, before the motion was passed by the Council, he proposed only to say a very few words, upon the answer to which, when his honorable friend replied, would depend the course which he should take in the matter. His honorable friend had been good enough to place his name upon the Committee, and he should be very glad to give his services, on one condition. Any one who paid attention to what had been going on in relation to the Native expenditure must be perfectly well aware of this: that a system had been growing up—and he did not say it had grown up under any one particular Administration or another—by which, upon the personal action and will of the particular Minister who had control of the Native Department, the colony had found itself placed, year after year, under engagement to the extent of very large amounts of money. Now, for successive years he, for one, had watched the increase of this abuse with great concern and apprehension; but it had now culminated to a point where, he believed, it imperatively required the immediate attention of Parliament. They were informed by Ministers of the Crown that this country was under a supposed engagement to the extent of nearly one million sterling for the purchase of Native lands. An amount of liability had been therefore incurred on the part of the colony—or, as he said, pretended to be incurred

on the part of the colony—at variance with the votes which the other House had appropriated for that object, at variance with the will of Parliament, as expressed by law, at variance with constitutional precedent and practice, and wholly destructive of any control by Parliament. They had been told that day that not only had there been a large over-expenditure of the Native votes, which it was the duty of the Council to inquire into, but, in addition to that expenditure which had been so incurred, they were told that we were launched into an enormous liability for land purchase: while at the same time they were informed by the same Ministerial Statement that a vast proportion of the money expended already, out of three-quarters of a million which had been voted by Parliament for the purchase of Native lands, had been applied to the acquisition of country which was wholly unfit for settlement, and from which there was no prospect of deriving any present or future revenue; so that financially, politically, economically, and socially the amount that had been paid for it might be considered money entirely thrown away. He would ask his honorable friend this: In proposing the appointment of this Committee, for what object did he ask that it should sit? If his honorable friend meant to say, after the statements made in Parliament in the last year or two, that all the Committee would do was to investigate these liabilities on the assumption that, notwithstanding that they largely exceeded the vote of Parliament and rested upon no lawful authority, they were to treat them as binding engagements, then he must ask his honorable friend to withdraw his name from the Committee, for he certainly should take no trouble in the investigation. But if, on the other hand, his honorable friend would join with him in laying down, as a basis upon which the Council appointed the Committee, that they would recognize nothing as an engagement or a liability of the colony for which an appropriation had not been made and authority of law had not been given, then he would go into the work, which would be a work involving a great deal of detail, and which he believed would, on that basis, be a very great advantage to the public service. The reason why he put this question to his honorable friend was this: They had already undertaken what he thought those honorable members who were engaged in it would recognize to be a very laborious work, in connection with the railways investigation; and as it proceeded they found that the questions were assuming a magnitude which perhaps had not been thoroughly understood beforehand; but he had not attempted to ask the Council to appoint a Committee for proceeding with that investigation without clear objects. In the first place, he had long been well aware, in a general way, of the tendency of the facts which he desired to inquire into; but it was his determination to lead the consideration of the Committee, and ultimately of the Council, to the imperative and immediate necessity of restraining, by very much more strict, and stringent, and inviolable conditions, the personal action of Ministers in relation to entering into railway contracts. He had started in that inquiry with

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the determination to admit nothing as authority excepting that which Parliament had voted, and to allow no contract to be considered binding upon the country unless entered into in accordance with law; and with that determination, and from that basis, he thought the labours of the Railway Committee, if he might be permitted to say so, would lead to very beneficial results. He would therefore ask his honorable friend if he was going to take the same course, and if he intended to enter upon this inquiry with an unbending determination to restore to Parliament the control they had thrown away, and to bring the facts of the past in review, in order to bring about a real and efficient reform. If so, he (Sir F. Dillon Bell) would give all the time and attention that was requisite for the prosecution of a work of that kind; but, if this Committee was only for the purpose of finding out the faults of some particular Minister or Administration, and holding them up to public ridicule or public censure, then for that purpose it would be useless, and he would ask his honorable friend to relieve him from serving upon it.

The Hon. Captain FRASER said he took exactly the view expressed by the honorable gentleman who had just sat down. If this Committee was merely intended to search into the pigeon-holes for the purpose of finding charges against the administration of the late Ministry, he would desire that his name should be taken off the Committee. A system had been going on for the last seven or eight years, and probably the Committee would have to carry their researches back to that time. He agreed with everything which the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell had said, and, if the Hon. Mr. Miller would accept the conditions stated by that honorable gentleman, he (Captain Fraser) would consent that his name should be retained on the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON thought it desirable that the motion should be adjourned for a time. It would be obvious to the Council that a very large question was involved here, and it would be a source of great embarrassment to any Government if the Committee had to report as to the propriety of carrying on these land purchases. Beyond any doubt the Government ought to be largely represented, and the honorable gentleman who led the Council should be on the Committee. Large engagements had been entered into, and it would be a source of great embarrassment to any Government that this Committee should report without the Government being fully represented. He would suggest that the honorable member should adjourn his motion. The question was one of great importance, and involved large political considerations.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE thought the motion a very important one, and he might as well add that he believed the Committee would be a very desirable one to appoint. He did not take the view which his honorable and learned friend had just now taken with regard to the undesirability of inquiring into these land purchases, on the ground that such an inquiry would be an embarrassing one to the Government, seeing that the Government had entered

into large engagements. He took the view expressed by the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell. They must not look to what would be embarrassing to the Government, but to what was required in the interests of the colony, irrespective of all Governments; and this was one of those things which should be inquired into, and which we were bound to inquire into. With respect to the Government entering into engagements for the purchase of Native land not authorized by the Legislature, if he understood aright arrangements had been entered into involving something like a million sterling not authorized by the Legislature—there were reasonable grounds to believe that such was the case—and it was the duty of Parliament to look into the matter. These engagements ought not to be gone into without the authority of Parliament, for the simple reason that the Government had not the power of binding the colony to any contract, and any contract was invalid unless, prior to entering into that contract, Ministers had received the authority of Parliament. But, while there was no validity attached to these contracts, there was the moral obligation, which they should all recognize, and which the Parliament would undoubtedly respect. He maintained, however, that this moral obligation should not be entered into until Parliament, in the first instance, had been made aware, at any rate, of the intention, and had expressed an opinion upon it. He thought that his honorable friend (the Hon. Mr. Miller) would have no objection whatever to stating that the inquiry instituted should be in accordance with those lines which had been laid down by the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell. He believed the Hon. Mr. Miller wished to put these things right: things had been going wrong, and he wished to put them right. His honorable friend's idea was that by the appointment of such a Committee remedial measures might be suggested, and, if adopted, that they would have the effect of preventing a recurrence of many like irregularities—more especially in connection with the purchase of Native land—which had occurred in the past. He did not wish to enter into the general policy of the Government buying Native land, but he could scarcely refrain from saying that he believed it would be in the interests of the colony if that policy were reconsidered and, he might say, altogether abandoned. The effect of the present system was to very materially check the settlement of the country, and at the present time it had the result of giving to Government a lot of worthless land, and obligations involving the colony in large yearly payments of interest. One of the faults in connection with the purchase of Native lands was, that their agents had an interest in taking a sanguine view of the character of the land they bought; and in a great many, he believed the majority of, cases the agents were not experts, were not judges of the character of land, and were apt to be misled by others to whom they applied for information. There was no point on which persons were more apt to get erroneous ideas than the character of Native land, and if they trusted to others for their information they were sure to be deceived. He was informed the

other day by a friend of his that some short time ago he had had representations made to him by persons in whom he (the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse) should have the utmost confidence, recommending him to enter into negotiations for the purchase of a considerable quantity of land on the West Coast. He was assured that this land could be obtained at about the same price as that for which the Government were purchasing it—8s. an acre. He was further assured that the market value of the land would be £2 or £3 an acre. He advanced £500 with a view to the purchase, and, having advanced to that extent, he thought it just as well to go up and see it. He went up, and found that the land was not worth sixpence an acre. He abandoned the £500 which he had already advanced, sooner than complete the purchase. He knew two or three cases of a similar character which had occurred, and believed that these cases would be found to be very common indeed. The whole question of the desirableness or otherwise of purchasing Native land should be gone into, and he felt satisfied it could not be gone into and reported on without beneficial results accruing to the colony. He hoped his honorable friend would go on with the motion.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said that, in voting for this motion, he should be guided, as he thought all other honorable members would be guided, by the considerations expressed by the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell. It would appear that in their Native land transactions the late Government had adopted and carried out a policy of their own, which was absolutely and entirely opposed to the policy of the Legislature of the colony, as expressed in its former Acts, and which, in its financial aspect, in view of the expenditure which was involved by it, was not sanctioned by the Legislature at all: that policy was a policy of the Ministry, or of one or two members of it, and not in any sense the policy of the Legislature of the Colony of New Zealand. He thought that the objection which his honorable and learned friend Mr. Wilson took to the appointment of the Committee was not a substantial one, inasmuch as the duties of a Committee, and the objects for which it was appointed, were to collect information on a specified subject, to report the result to the Council, and, in certain cases, as he had so often said before, to formulate an opinion for the Council, based on the evidence they had been able to obtain. But the report of a Committee in no way bound the Council, and, in that sense, the danger which his honorable and learned friend seemed to foresee, that the Council might possibly be committed by some expression of opinion upon some evidence brought before this Committee, was visionary at present. Until the report of the Committee was formally considered and adopted, it did not represent the opinion of the Council in its collective capacity.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER said the motion did not contemplate that they were to discuss the question of Native land purchases. It appeared to him, so far as the wording of the resolution went, that it was simply for the purpose of inquiring and reporting generally upon the expenditure during the year ended 30th June,

1879, and for the quarter ended 30th September, 1879, under the votes for Native purposes and Native land purchases. Now, there was no question in the motion as to whether Native land purchases should be continued or discontinued. If the Council would accept the suggestion that this motion be allowed to pass as it was, then the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell might move that the sphere of the Committee be extended for the purpose to which the honorable member alluded. They could then have discussion upon that, and the Council, if it thought fit, would extend the inquiry; but going into such an inquiry now would be going beyond the resolution proposed by the honorable gentleman. He thought it very desirable, when Committees were appointed, that they should specifically adhere to the object for which they were appointed; and it appeared to him that, by the motion, this Committee would be confined to the collecting together of all the accounts in connection with land-purchase and Native expenditure, and the classifying of them for the information of the Council. He agreed that it was very desirable that the question raised by the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell and the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse should be ventilated and gone into. If this Committee were appointed, then a resolution might be moved to the effect that the Committee should extend its inquiries into the matters referred to by those honorable gentlemen. He thought such an inquiry very desirable. On the other hand, he thought, so far as this motion went at present, that it did not contemplate what the honorable gentlemen wanted to do. He presumed they need not have much discussion on the motion as it stood. The other question raised in the discussion was a much wider one, and it might be very desirable that the labours of the Committee should be extended into these matters; but he thought it should form the subject of a separate motion on a future day. Let this motion pass, and let the other subject be brought on by regular motion for the purpose.

The Hon. Mr. WILLIAMSON thought this inquiry was wanted. There was a power in the hands of the Government with regard to Native lands which he did not think they should possess. They could now proclaim that portions of the country were not to be dealt with by Europeans, or they could withdraw such a Proclamation in favour of individuals. It was currently reported in the North that there were Europeans surveying a block of land in the Patetere District, over which there was a Proclamation. It should not be in the power of any Government to withdraw Proclamations in this way. There should be one mode of dealing with these lands: if it was thought to be in the interests of the colony there should be no other purchasers but the Government, then let the thing be carried out in its entirety. His own opinion was, that there should be absolute free-trade in the purchase of Native land; he believed it would promote settlement much more rapidly. The present system, in the first place, gave rise to a disinclination on the part of the Natives to deal with the Government, because they felt that they had only one party to go to, and got what they considered only a low

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price. He was in favour of some such legislation as would make it unprofitable for any speculator to hold land without improving it. He thought, too, that, the moment land passed into the hands of Europeans, it should be subject to rates, and that all lands should be rated on one scale, or at different values according to the quality of the land. No holder should pay rates on the improvements he had made on the land. This should apply not only to country but to town land. No doubt the different phases of this subject would come before the Committee, and a recommendation might be made to the Council that might or might not produce fruit. However, he thought that the appointment of the Committee was a step in the right direction.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON said that, if he understood the remarks of the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell rightly, his object was to limit the purport of the inquiry to a certain extent. He could not quite ascertain to what extent that went; but it seemed to him, as he read the notice, there was a small difference of opinion. The Hon. the Attorney-General read the first part of the motion, and said he took it the Committee was simply to inquire into and report generally upon the expenditure during the year ended the 30th June, 1879, and for the quarter ended the 30th September, 1879, meaning thereby the votes for Native purposes and Native land purchases. If he understood the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, however, his object was to confine the Committee to the extent of expenditure authorized by vote of Parliament, and so as not to recognize engagements outside the votes of Parliament.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL said perhaps his honorable friend would allow him to explain. The Committee, if appointed, would be ordered to inquire into and report generally upon the votes; but, if the Committee were going to inquire generally and report generally, they ought to know whether they were to inquire into the alleged engagements to the extent of a million: otherwise, was it worth the amount of labour that would be bestowed upon it?

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON had wished to point out what seemed to be a misunderstanding after what had fallen from the Attorney-General, who, apparently, had understood the motion simply to apply to the question as to votes for Native purposes. But in reading further he had observed that such report was to be accompanied by a detailed statement of the whole expenditure for Native purposes during the above-named period, classified in such manner as the Committee might consider desirable, and specifying the vote to which each class of expenditure had been charged.

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY thought the latter part of the motion would bring under consideration matters never contemplated by the mover—for instance, Native land purchases. He suggested, therefore, that it would be better to have a separate Committee to deal with the question of Native land purchases.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER thought that Mr. Wilson had misapprehended the terms of the

motion, because it would scarcely bear the construction that honorable gentleman had put upon it. As he (Mr. Miller) thought a public inquiry of this kind would be of great public importance, he certainly did not feel disposed to consent to the postponement of the motion. The Hon. Captain Fraser seemed to think, or rather hinted, that there was some sort of detective spirit at the bottom of the motion; but, so far as he (Mr. Miller) was concerned—and he thought he spoke the feelings of the Council generally, there was no such idea. The object of the Committee was to inquire, as generally as possible, into the expenditure for Native purposes during the term specified in the motion, and of course it would be their duty to proceed upon a perfectly fair and impartial basis—"nothing to extenuate, nor to set down aught in malice." It would be their duty unhesitatingly to declare what expenditure had been incurred under the authority of law, and what not under the authority of law. He did not for a moment suppose that the Committee would consider it to be their duty to stop there. They would no doubt make some recommendations with regard to unauthorized expenditure—were they to find there had been such—recommendations which would be made with a view to the public weal, and not with reference to any particular Ministry that might be in power or out of power. He believed that some strong recommendation would be made, but further than that he did not wish to go at present. He wished to approach the question impartially, and hoped it would be approached impartially by all, and that the Council would discard any such idea as that hinted at by the Hon. Captain Fraser, but that, if anything improper were discovered, steps would be taken to declare what were the proper remedies. That was the whole object of the Committee. He had no doubt whatever that, if such reports were current in another country with regard to administration as were current here, every one in that Council would consider it a gross dereliction of duty on the part of the Parliament of that country if it did not cause inquiry to be made as to the truth of those reports. As to what the Attorney-General had suggested, he could not just then say what would be the best course; but, whenever the motion which that honorable gentleman proposed should be made, the Council would be able to consider whether it would be advisable to extend the inquiry to that extent.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at forty-six minutes past three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 21st October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Readings—Christchurch City—Waikaka Settlement—Debtors and Creditors Act—Auckland Coal Traffic—Queenstown—Arrowtown Communication—Arrowtown Survey Office—Te Aro Post and Telegraph Office—Land-Tax Act—East and West Railway, Middle Island—Oamaru Supreme Court—S. Phillips—Water-races—Gold Returns—Counties Act—Gold Exports—Dunedin—Caversham Bridge—Trust Funds—Northern Maori District—Qualification of Electors Bill—Mr. Hall's Resignation of his Seat in the Legislative Council—Triennial Parliaments Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Queenstown Racecourse Reserves Bill, Sites for Working Men's Clubs Bill, Dramatic Copyright Bill, Wairarapa Racecourse Bill, Hawke's Bay Rivers Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Napier Swamp Nuisance Bill, Primitive Methodists' Temporal Affairs Management Bill, Te Aro Reclamation Bill.

CHRISTCHURCH CITY.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The time has now arrived for swearing the Committee to try the allegations contained in the petition against the return of Sir George Grey for Christchurch City. The names will be called over and the members sworn by the Clerk.

The CLERK read the names of the Committee as follow: Messrs. Fulton, Moorhouse, Stewart, Colbeck, McCaughan, Allwright, and Tawhai.

Mr. HALL.—Before the members are sworn, Sir, I wish to ask your ruling whether the honorable member, Mr. Tawhai, against whose election there is a petition before the House on account of his alleged disqualification, is eligible to be a member of this Committee, and to be sworn to act upon it. I would ask whether, when that Committee has completed its work, the question may not arise whether the proceedings were regular or not.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I am not aware that there are any grounds upon which I can declare that Mr. Tawhai is not eligible to sit on the Committee.

The members of the Committee were then sworn, and eleven o'clock next day was fixed for the first meeting.

WAIKAKA SETTLEMENT.

Mr. IRELAND asked the Government, If it is their intention to open land for settlement at Waikaka; and, if so, when steps are likely to be taken with that object?

Mr. ROLLESTON said that inquiries had been made, and it was ascertained that the Crown lands in a portion of this valley were auriferous, and comprised about a thousand acres. The other portion of the valley was an education reserve, and was not in the hands of the Government to deal with.

DEBTORS AND CREDITORS ACT.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Minister of Justice, Whether he will introduce a Bill to amend subsection (2) of section 106 of "The Debtors and Creditors Act, 1876," so as to give to artisans and labourers a preferential claim for wages due to the extent of three months, instead of one month, as provided by the Act? He wished to point out that many cases of great hardship had come under his notice during the last few months in connection with numerous bankruptcy cases, by which men of the labouring class had lost the fruit of their labour. Under "The Debtors and Creditors Act, 1876," clerks and domestic servants in similar cases were entitled to preferential claims for six months' wages, but in the cases of artisans and labourers preferential claims were limited to one month. Now, he thought that, as a matter of equity, it would not be unreasonable to increase the period from one month to three months.

Mr. HALL said the Government had considered this subject, and were of opinion that legislation was desirable in the direction indicated by the honorable member. It was one of those measures they proposed to take up as soon as their measures of liberal reform, which were now on the Order Paper, had been put on the Statute Book.

AUCKLAND COAL TRAFFIC.

Mr. WHYTE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Government have taken any steps towards the construction of coal shoots at the railway wharf, Auckland, and the wharf, Onehunga; and, if not, do they intend to do so?

Mr. OLIVER replied that the District Engineer had been instructed to erect coal shoots at the Onehunga Wharf by way of temporary accommodation to meet the requirements of that port. Coal shoots would be used both at Onehunga and Auckland.

QUEENSTOWN—ARROWTOWN COMMUNICATION.

Mr. FINN asked the Government, When they intend to establish a daily communication between Queenstown and Arrowtown? He wished to point out to the Government that Arrowtown was a most important portion of his district, and was distant fourteen miles only from Queenstown, which had a daily mail to and from Dunedin.

Mr. HALL said the question did not state whether it was postal or passenger communication the honorable gentleman wished established.

Mr. FINN said it was merely postal communication.

Mr. HALL said that to establish coach communication between these two places for passenger accommodation would involve considerable expense. If the settlers would be content with additional postal communication three days a week, that could be done for a reasonable sum of money, and the Government would attend to the matter.

ARROWTOWN SURVEY OFFICE.

Mr. FINN asked the Government, If they in-

tend to open a survey office at Arrowtown? There was a very large population at Arrowtown and its neighbourhood, and it was considered absolutely necessary to have a survey office opened there.

Mr. ROLLESTON said that facilities would be afforded by the survey maps being placed in the District Land Office, where every information could be obtained. He would make further inquiries into the matter, and give the honorable gentleman the information he obtained.

Mr. FINN said that hitherto the miners had not had access to any survey maps at Arrowtown.

TE ARO POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

Mr. LEVIN asked the Postmaster-General, If he will cause a sum of money to be placed on the estimates for building a post and telegraph office at Te Aro, in the City of Wellington? He was prompted to ask this question because last year a sum of £1,500 was voted for the purpose of providing a post and telegraph office at Te Aro, but no such building had been erected. It was true that a temporary and inconvenient office had been opened within the precincts of the Armed Constabulary Barracks, but the situation was objected to, and it was felt that, with the large and increasing population at the southern end of the town, a more accessible and commodious building was required.

Mr. HALL said the honorable gentleman was quite correct in stating that a sum was placed on the estimates last year for this purpose, but was not expended. He had also stated fairly that a post office had been opened at Te Aro; that it was tolerably well placed, being in the centre of the district; that it was not so convenient an office as was to be desired, and that they believed further accommodation should be furnished. But, looking to the very large claims which had already been made upon the public funds for the present financial year, and to the necessity for economizing expenditure as much as possible, the Government had been compelled to conclude that this was one of the items of expenditure that must be postponed until another financial year.

LAND-TAX ACT.

Mr. FINN asked the Government, If they intend, during this or any future session, to amend or repeal "The Land-Tax Act, 1878"? He might state that if a Bill were introduced to repeal "The Land-Tax Act, 1878," it would have his support. At present various mining companies in his district were severely taxed under it. For instance, the Tipperary Company, which had only commenced active operations about eighteen months, and only occupied seven acres of land, was taxed on £10,000. He considered this a great injustice, and therefore trusted that the Government would take immediate steps to amend, if not to repeal, the present Land-Tax Act, or, at all events, to introduce a measure exempting mining property from this taxation.

Major ATKINSON, in reply, said there were several matters in connection with the Land-Tax Act which required consideration, and which

were now under consideration. The question of whether the Government would propose to repeal the Act during this or any future session was one of large financial policy. He hoped at the end of next week, or the beginning of the week after, to submit to the House the financial proposals of the Government, and then he would deal with this question of the land-tax.

EAST AND WEST RAILWAY, MIDDLE ISLAND.

Mr. ANDREWS asked the Government, If it is their intention to take any steps towards a new survey for the East and West Railway, Middle Island? His constituents were very anxious to know what the decided opinions of the present Government were respecting this particular question.

Mr. OLIVER, in reply, said the Government believed that further surveys would be required for this route, and they had the matter under consideration at the present moment.

OAMARU SUPREME COURT.

Mr. SHRIMSKI asked the Government, Whether they will make provision for a Supreme Court sitting at Oamaru?

Mr. ROLLESTON said he found that the District Court sat at Oamaru monthly for civil cases, and quarterly for criminal cases. At present the Government did not consider that sittings of the Supreme Court were called for at Oamaru.

S. PHILLIPS.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government intend to give effect to the report of the Public Petitions Committee, made last session, and referred by this House to the Government, in the case of the petition of Samuel Phillips? This question had already been asked three times. At the end of last session, after the report of the Public Petitions Committee was brought up, he asked the question of the late Government, but he did not then expect a positive answer, because the report had only just been presented. During this session the honorable member for Newton, who was a member of the Petitions Committee, asked the late Government the same question, and the reply was, that they had not yet made up their mind on the subject. He now asked the present Government, and hoped they would be able to give a definite answer. It was a case in which there was a grievance. A young man named Phillips petitioned the House in regard to his dismissal from the public service. He was brought up in the service of the colony, having been employed in the photo-lithographic department. The Committee came to the unanimous conclusion that he had been unjustly and improperly dismissed from the public service. It was not usual for the Public Petitions Committee to inquire into the cases of persons dismissed from the public service unless under exceptional circumstances; but where it appeared that public officers had been unjustly dismissed the Public Petitions Committee had always interfered and made strong recommendations; and this was one of those cases. The

petitioner was dismissed on the alleged ground of obstructing the work of the office, owing to the appointment of a new head officer superior to him. In the inquiry which took place it appeared that he was an efficient officer, that he performed his work thoroughly and well, and that he always carried out the orders given to him, although it was stated by his superior officer that he generally obstructed the work of the department. After inquiry, the Committee unanimously concluded that the charges against him were not proved—that he had been unjustly removed from the service, and ought to be restored. Twelve months had now elapsed since his dismissal, and of course he had suffered considerable pecuniary loss; and the Government ought at once to say whether they intended to do an act of justice in this matter or not.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that the Government had not yet had time to go into the question. The position of the case, as he found it, was this: His predecessor in office thought there was cause for asking the House to refer the case back to the Petitions Committee, and there was a notice of motion on the Paper at the present time for that purpose. The Government considered that the case at present was in a very unsatisfactory position, and, before the motion he had referred to came on, they would be able to state to the House the course which they considered should be taken in the matter. At present he regretted that he had not had time to go into the case and to form an opinion upon it.

WATER-RACES.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether they will cause to be published quarterly returns showing the expenditure on, and receipts from, the various water-races constructed by the Government in the colony? This question was one of great importance. He failed to see why there should not be returns from water-races, the same as there were from other sources of revenue. From the Appendix attached to the Public Works Statement it would be seen that in the Middle Island the money which had been applied to water-races had returned a larger interest than the expenditure on any other public works in the colony. Such being the case, and seeing that honorable members had not had an opportunity of observing the advantages that were derived from the construction of these works, he brought the matter under the notice of the Government, and hoped they would give an answer in the affirmative, and that these returns would be published quarterly.

Major ATKINSON replied that the Government would cause the returns to be published in the manner mentioned.

GOLD RETURNS.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether they will cause to be published quarterly returns showing—(1) The amount of gold produced in each riding of the several counties in which are situate proclaimed gold fields; (2) return showing the amount of gold produced within the limits of the several boroughs in which are also situate pro-

claimed gold fields; and (3) whether instructions will be given to Receivers of Gold Fields Revenue and Gold Duty to pay direct to the credit of county or borough funds the amounts due to them from the aforesaid sources? With regard to the first question, he might say that the various County Councils endeavoured as fairly and as equitably as they could to redistribute the revenue among the different ridings from which it was derived; but, as they had at present no means of ascertaining how much each riding contributed, it was difficult to make a perfectly fair division. In reference to the second question, he might mention that boroughs on gold fields were now drawing gold-fields revenue in the shape of miners' rights and gold duty. The gold produced outside boroughs was sometimes sold in those boroughs, which received all the revenue, and the county got none. At present there were no means of ascertaining how far this injustice had been carried on at the West Coast. As to the third question, seeing that the revenue referred to was local revenue, the whole of which went to the counties and boroughs, he thought the time which was occupied in sending it to Wellington to be returned again to the local bodies was lost, and that the present plan should be dispensed with. The revenue might be paid by the Receivers of Revenue into the local office of the borough or county entitled to receive it.

Major ATKINSON, in regard to the honorable gentleman's first question, might say that the Government experienced very great difficulty in getting the returns from the counties; and, as the law stood at present, it would be quite impossible to get them from the ridings. There was no doubt that in many cases gold dug in one place was sold in another, and credit given to the borough in which it was sold; but, without a very stringent law, compelling the buyers to make a declaration as to where the gold was mined, it would be impossible to ascertain more accurately than at present how the revenue should be allocated. Whether the miners would not think the proposed remedy a greater grievance than the loss of duty to the particular locality, he was not in a position to say. But he would be very happy to confer with the Gold Fields members on the subject, and carry out the view they desired to see adopted. With regard to the second question, the Mayors were informed regularly of the amount of duty collected, and the sum was paid over to them once a month. As far as he was at present advised, there would be no serious objection to pay the amount over direct to the local bodies entitled to receive it. He would look into that matter; and, if he found it so, he would give directions accordingly.

Mr. SEDDON might inform the Colonial Treasurer that, at the request of the county authorities on the West Coast, the banks kept books in which they entered the purchases made. This was quite voluntary on their part. With the view of assisting the Colonial Treasurer in dealing with this matter, he would suggest the following method: That it shall be compulsory for all gold-buyers to be licensed, and that they should ascertain by inquiries from the sellers of gold the dis-

strict where such gold was raised, and such gold-buyer shall keep a record of the locality where raised, and furnish a return thereof by sworn declaration every month to the Collector of Customs at the nearest shipping port; also that it shall be compulsory for the exporter of all gold to declare in what county or borough the gold exported by him was declared to have been produced. Penalties to be incurred for false statements. The fees for licenses to be nominal; any person purchasing without license to be subject to penalties. He might say that, as stated by the honorable gentleman, the boroughs did receive this revenue direct, but that the counties received it second-hand from the Government.

Major ATKINSON said that would require fresh legislation, and he should be happy to confer with the Gold Fields members on the subject, with a view to see whether the existing law could be improved.

COUNTIES ACT.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether it is their intention to bring in a Bill this session to amend the Counties Act? To his mind this was a question of more importance than the Bills they had heard so much about during the past few weeks. First of all, an amendment was required in the present method of raising revenues: next, some provision was required for the maintenance of main roads leading through boroughs, the traffic upon which roads contributed not one shilling to the revenue of those boroughs; also, for the construction and maintenance of main arterial roads in gold-fields counties by the Government: and, thirdly, a classification of the counties and a rearrangement of subsidies was required, so that, instead of being paid upon the rateable value of the property within their boundaries, the gold-fields counties should be paid upon the gold revenue received by them. Then there was another matter that pressed heavily upon the gold-fields counties, and that was, that an alien who paid 5s. in rates was entitled to have his name on the county roll, and it was compulsory upon the Revising Officer to put it there, while a miner who, being an alien, paid £1 per annum for his miner's right, was not allowed to have his name there. There was also the question of raising revenue for charitable purposes. The people on the gold fields objected to the present method of raising revenue by voluntary subscriptions, and were inclined to the imposition of a hospital rate, so that every person would be compelled to pay. This was a matter which affected the local bodies throughout the colony, and should therefore occupy the attention of the Government in any amendments they contemplated making. These were a few of the reasons which induced him to put the question on the Paper, and he hoped the Government would say what were their intentions in the matter.

Mr. HALL said that, as Chairman of a county, he sympathized with the honorable gentleman in his desire to see the Counties Act amended. The Government were of opinion that it required amendment in many respects; but it was one of

those subjects which must be postponed until the Electoral Bill had been disposed of.

GOLD EXPORTS.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether they will lay before this House a return showing the total amount of gold exported (in quantity and value) from the colony up to the 30th September, 1879, and the amount of gold duty paid thereon; also, what ports the said gold was exported or shipped from; and, as far as practicable, the numbers of the adult male population on the different proclaimed gold fields, averaged for each year? Seeing that it was the professed intention of the Government to take up the question of the incidence of taxation, he wished to have these returns laid before the House in order to show the amount paid under this special tax by this class of colonists. It was only right that these figures should be before them. While they were making these liberal laws it was only right that they should pass a law which would make taxation fall more equally than it did at present upon the gold miners.

Major ATKINSON said the honorable gentleman would find all the information he required, as far as it was possible to obtain it, in the published documents. The information asked for in the first part of the question was given on page 1,448 of the *Gazette*, published on the 16th instant. The quarterly returns of the gold exported were to be found in the *Gazette*, and in the Annual Statistics. As to the average number of miners on the gold fields, it would be impossible to give the information required, because the Government had no statistics which would give the number. They only had the number as shown by the census, which the honorable gentleman would find at page 78 of the Census Returns.

Mr. SEDDON asked whether he was to understand that it was too much trouble for the Government to give instructions to the Government officers to find the information, and that he was to find it himself.

Major ATKINSON thought it hardly fair of the honorable gentleman to make such a remark. If the House desired that the information—which was already published—should be published in another form, the Government would be happy to have that done. It was ordinarily understood that if the information furnished was not sufficient the Government should give further information if it were obtainable.

Mr. SEDDON said that if the Colonial Treasurer would read the question he would observe that it asked, "Whether the Government would lay before the House a return showing the total amount of gold exported." It would take him (Mr. Seddon) some time and trouble to get the particulars, while the officers, who had greater facilities than he had, could get them with less difficulty.

Major ATKINSON said that, if he understood it to be the desire of the honorable gentleman that the information contained in the *Gazette* should be placed before the House in another form, there would be no difficulty in doing that.

He had no intention of being discourteous to the honorable gentleman; he had merely followed the usual custom in stating that the information would be found in the *Gazette*.

DUNEDIN-CAVERSHAM BRIDGE.

Mr. BARRON asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will cause a sum of money to be placed on the estimates for the purpose of improving the railway bridge on the main road between Dunedin and Caversham, and making that bridge less dangerous and better adapted for the increasing road traffic?

Mr. OLIVER said he was aware of the inconvenience that resulted from the angle at which the road passes under the railway bridge. He found, however, that to widen the bridge would cost over £1,000, while to alter the course of the road under the bridge would only cost £100 or £200. He should be happy to confer with the honorable gentleman, and see whether some arrangement could not be made between the local body and the Government in order to effect the desired improvement.

TRUST FUNDS.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether he would lay on the table of the House a return showing the investments of the trust funds?

Major ATKINSON said there would be no objection to lay the return on the table.

NORTHERN MAORI DISTRICT.

Mr. BEETHAM, before the Orders of the day were proceeded with, asked Mr. Speaker to give his ruling on a point connected with the mode of procedure to be adopted in the case of Mohi Tawhai, the member for the Northern Maori District. He had a motion dealing with the subject on the Paper, but, as it might be some time before the House came to its consideration, he had referred to May's Parliamentary Practice, and it seemed clear, from that authority, that the question should come up before the Orders of the day, even though it was an adjourned debate. He would quote from May in support of his contention. At page 252 would be found this passage:—

"Where the question is *bona fide* one of privilege, the House will at once entertain it before any other business. This ancient rule was thus expressed in debate by an eminent authority: 'Nothing can be so regular, according to the practice of this House, as, when any member brings under the consideration of the House a breach of its privileges, for the House to hear—nay, to hear it with or without notice—whether any question is or is not before it; and, even in the midst of another discussion, if a member should rise to complain of a breach of the privileges of the House, they have always instantly heard him.' The latter part of this statement, it need scarcely be said, is limited to breaches of privilege committed during a discussion, or so immediately before it that no earlier opportunity of making a complaint had arisen."

Major Atkinson

Again, May said,—

"When such a question is not at once disposed of, but a future day is appointed for its consideration, it has been customary on that day also to give it priority."

Many other similar instances were given, and May went on to say,—

"Where debates have been adjourned upon urgent questions of privilege, similar precedence has been given to the adjourned debates."

He wished to point out that this question, relating as it did to the disqualification of a member, was really one of urgency. He also understood that the honorable gentleman affected had been appointed and sworn in as a member of the Election Committee appointed to try the petition against the return of Sir George Grey for the City of Christchurch. In a case of the kind it ought at once to be decided whether Mr. Mohi Tawhai was or was not entitled to retain his seat in the House.

Mr. SPEAKER was aware that there was a good deal of competition just now to obtain precedence for certain notices of motion; and it was his duty to be very cautious how he allowed precedence to any motion. There was a considerable conflict of opinion as to the right of motions of privilege to take precedence. He had looked carefully into the matter. It was true that May laid down the rule given in the passages quoted by the honorable member; but he found these observations too, in May's Parliamentary Practice:—

"In order to entitle a question of privilege to precedence, it must refer to some matter which has recently arisen, which directly concerns the privileges of the House, and calls for its present interposition."

And, after referring to cases to which precedence had been given, he closes his remarks on this head with the following words:—

"But in some other cases of privilege, of a less urgent character, it has been ruled that adjourned debates were not entitled to precedence."

Finding that the rule was not decisively fixed in this text-book, he referred then to a well-known work on parliamentary procedure, The Decisions of Mr. Speaker Shaw Le Ferre, and he found the following heading to one of these decisions:—

"When a question of privilege has been adjourned, on its renewal it is not entitled to precedence. Subjects ought not to be introduced as 'privilege' which can be discussed without inconvenience, in the ordinary manner, on a future day."

It was in reference to the case of the Bridport election. A member asked whether he could not bring on, as a matter of privilege, the question relating to that borough, and a petition he had presented on the subject. Mr. Speaker's remarks were as follow:—

"It certainly is not such a matter of privilege as entitles it to precedence. I will remind the House of the relative strictness with which the rule as to privilege is enforced. If a debate on a question of undoubted privilege be adjourned, on its renewal it is not entitled to precedence. I am therefore of opinion that, according to the letter

and spirit of the rule applied to such cases, the consideration of the petition regarding Bridport is not to be held a matter of privilege.

That was exactly what they had here, and he could not, therefore, disturb the arrangement of the Order Paper.

QUALIFICATION OF ELECTORS BILL.

Mr. HALL.—Before speaking on the motion for leave to introduce this Bill, it will be for the convenience of the House that I should state the course the Government propose to adopt with regard to this measure, and the other measures relating to electoral reform. It will be in the recollection of the House that the Government, with a view to saving the public time and promoting the despatch of business, made various propositions to honorable gentlemen opposite. We proposed in the first place to take the debate on the no-confidence motion this day, if in the meantime they would allow business to go on. Another proposition which was then made unofficially by us was, that we should have a special sitting on Monday to discuss that question. Both those proposals have been rejected, and we have therefore practically done no business up to the present time. Under these circumstances, the Government think they have exhausted every means of conciliation which was open to them, and that the course adopted by honorable gentlemen opposite does not afford any indication of the anxiety of those honorable gentlemen to pass these important Bills. The Government, therefore, are not prepared to allow the conduct of these measures to pass out of their hands, and they propose to go on with them and press them until they are placed on the Statute Book, without taking any other Government business in the meantime. We believe that in that course we shall be following out the wishes of the country at large. We believe we shall be supported by a majority of the House; and we are confident we shall be supported by the voice of the country. That is an explanation which I thought it desirable for the House to receive before we proceeded to discuss this measure further.

On the question, That the question be now put,

Mr. HALL said,—Sir, before that question is put, I wish to offer a few remarks to the House. I am not quite sure whether I shall be at liberty to reply to anything said on the question of the adjournment of the debate; but, as I take that discussion to have been a part of the general debate, probably I shall be at liberty to reply to some of the remarks then made. Before alluding to the general question, I feel bound to refer to remarks that fell from one or two honorable members on the occasion referred to, and especially to those of the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey), who spoke in very strong language of my colleagues and myself; he also made statements on other subjects, which I shall not refer to on the present occasion, but which I shall take another opportunity of answering. When I sought the honor of obtaining a seat in this House, for the District of Selwyn, I knew I exposed myself to the risk of the personalities

which the honorable member for the Thames has thought it right to introduce into the debates of this House, and to the kind of charges which it has been his custom to bring against honorable members who happen to hold a leading position in opposition to himself. I determined when I took my seat that nothing of that kind should originate with myself; that I would, as far as possible, avoid anything in the nature of unnecessary personal criticism; that I would pursue the course that used to be pursued in this House for many years, of endeavouring to concede to political opponents the same honest, high-minded motives we claim for ourselves; and this House is my witness that I have adhered to that resolution. In speaking on the motion of want of confidence in the late Government, I abstained, even at the cost of not doing justice to my subject, from any unavoidable allusion to the honorable member for the Thames. But I regret very much indeed that the course which the honorable gentleman has adopted renders it impossible for me not to reply to him in somewhat the same strain—I do not say actually the same strain, but somewhat in the same strain—as he has adopted. The honorable gentleman referred to a subject which I very much regret he has thought it right to introduce into the House. He referred to the conduct of His Excellency in a manner in which the conduct of the Governor has never been referred to in our debates except by the honorable gentleman. He described the condition attached by His Excellency to the granting of a dissolution last session as unconstitutional, because that condition was that no contested motions were to be introduced. But, Sir, the honorable gentleman was, at the time this dissolution was granted, and continued for some time afterwards, the constitutional Adviser of the Governor. He was, therefore, according to the well-known constitutional maxim, responsible for the acts of the Governor.

Mr. BROWN.—No.

Mr. HALL.—Did I hear a "No"?

Mr. BROWN.—No.

Mr. HALL.—Well, there is, of course, no fathoming the depths of ignorance, on constitutional subjects, which some honorable members of this House may betray; but it must be a very great depth from which that "No" could proceed. To say that the constitutional Adviser of the Crown—the Responsible Adviser of the Crown—is not responsible for every act of administration of the Crown so long as he remains a servant of the Crown—whether the Crown is guided by his advice or not—contradicts every accepted constitutional doctrine which the honorable member will find in any books of authority on the subject. I am wasting time in endeavouring to establish that maxim in this House. It lies at the root of our system of parliamentary government. Therefore the honorable member for the Thames was himself responsible for that very condition, if he remained, as he did, the Responsible Adviser of the Crown; and it is most improper—most indecent—to come down to this House afterwards, and complain of that for which he himself is responsible. The honorable gentleman also stated—most improperly—that the

members of the present Government are the personal representatives of the Governor; and he blamed the Governor, as I understood him, for not having taken or asked advice of himself, as outgoing Minister, as to who should be sent for to form a new Government. I understand by the honorable gentleman's silence that I did not misunderstand him.

Sir G. GREY.—I beg that nothing may be drawn from my silence. I shall reply.

Mr. HALL.—Well, assuming that to be the honorable gentleman's contention, as it was so understood on this side of the House, I will, in disproof of it, quote from Todd the doctrine—which is the accepted doctrine—upon this subject. It is stated in Todd, Vol. I., p. 222,—

"It is now universally conceded that the Prime Minister—as the Minister in whom the Crown has placed its constitutional confidence, and who is responsible to his Sovereign for the government of the whole Empire—should be the free and unbiassed choice of the Crown itself. . . . A retiring Minister may, if requested by the Sovereign, suggest that any particular statesman should be empowered to form a new Administration; but such advice should not be obtruded upon the Sovereign unasked. Being debarred, by his own resignation or dismissal from office, from the constitutional right to tender advice to the Crown," &c.

The same authority further says,—

"Adverting to the circumstances attending his resignation of office in 1845, Sir Robert Peel said, in the House of Commons, 'I offered no opinion as to the choice of a successor. That is almost the only act which is the personal act of the Sovereign: it is for the Sovereign to determine in whom her confidence shall be placed.'"

I may state, further, that this doctrine is very well understood and acted upon in the neighbouring colonies—especially in New South Wales, the oldest of the Australian Colonies—and that it was acted upon by the honorable gentleman himself when Governor of this colony. The honorable gentleman will not say "No" to that statement. The honorable gentleman will not stand up in his place and assert that, when he was Governor, upon a Minister tendering his resignation he always invited that Minister to state whom he should send for, or that he necessarily accepted that Minister's advice. It is perfectly clear that it is the constitutional right of the Governor to send for whom he pleases. I repeat, it is a most improper and indecent thing to refer to the present occupants of these benches as the personal representatives of the Governor. The next matter I shall refer to is the charge he made against myself, in reference to my resignation of my seat in the Legislative Council. To the action of the Governor in that respect I will not refer now. It may be my duty to refer to it on a future occasion; but I would say a few words in reference to myself. The honorable gentleman has said that I twice broke faith with Her Majesty. That is a serious charge to come from any one, more especially with reference to a person in my present position. It is a most serious charge to come from one who for so many years, and in so many parts of the world, has been the Representative of

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the Crown. It comes with a weight from him with which it would come from no other man in this House, and he should not make that charge unless he has most ample and substantial grounds for doing so. What does that charge amount to? He says that there is a mutual compact between the Sovereign and persons appointed to the Legislative Council; that, as they are appointed for life, they are to remain there for life. Now, does the Constitution Act say that? On the contrary, the Constitution Act distinctly says that any member of the Legislative Council may resign his seat in the Council, and on his resignation being accepted by the Governor he ceases to be a member of the Council. There is a distinct provision, not that he shall remain for life a member of the Council, but for his ceasing to remain a member of the Council, and for the manner in which he may retire from it. Therefore, unless that provision is overruled by acknowledged authorities upon constitutional practice, I say the honorable gentleman has not the slightest foundation for his charge against me. In the year 1867 I resigned my seat in the Council for the purpose of contesting the election for Heathcote. The honorable gentleman was then Governor of this colony. He stated the other night that he was not aware I resigned for that purpose: that is not the point. He says that no person has a right to resign at all; that there is a mutual compact between the Sovereign and the person appointed that he shall remain there for life. It is not a question of what he will do after his resignation, but a mutual compact between the parties that the person appointed shall remain in the Council for life. The honorable gentleman was in 1876 the representative of the Crown. The House no sooner met after the elections than the then Government was displaced, and I was appointed by Sir George Grey to be one of his constitutional Advisers. Now, if what he now states is the doctrine he held all along—if it is a surely-established doctrine—does it not seem passing strange that the Representative of the Crown never in any way hinted to myself, or to any one of my colleagues, either at that time or during the years I sat at his Council board, that I had broken faith with Her Majesty upon this subject? Does it not seem perfectly incredible that the representative of the Crown failed to give the slightest hint to me that I had committed such an impropriety as that with which the honorable gentleman now charges me? The honorable gentleman says he did not know that I was going to contest the election for Heathcote. Of course it is possible he might not have known this. But I know that that was the hardest election I ever fought. It lasted three months. The House was prorogued at the ordinary time, and the contest commenced almost immediately. I did not resign my seat until the eve of the election, on the 23rd February, and the election took place on the 1st March. But this is not all. I am not the only one who has acted in this manner. The honorable gentleman now takes it upon himself to blame His Excellency for having accepted my resignation as a member of the Legislative Council.

What did the honorable gentleman do when he was Governor of the colony? Was mine the only resignation he accepted? I hold in my hand a list of the members whose resignations were accepted during the time the honorable gentleman was Governor of this colony. I think there were no fewer than nine resignations accepted by the honorable gentleman. Mr. James Richmond not only resigned his seat in the Legislative Council for the purpose of contesting a seat in the House of Representatives at the same time as myself, but he actually did not resign his seat in the Legislative Council until after he had been elected. Now, the honorable gentleman cannot contend that he did not know that Mr. Richmond was coming into the House, because he had actually been elected to the House before he resigned his seat in the Council, and before the honorable gentleman accepted his resignation. The honorable gentleman has got into the habit of sweeping aside old-established constitutional maxims whenever they happen to stand in his way, and of inventing new ones when he thinks they happen to suit his purpose. I contend that there never was a constitutional doctrine more entirely unfounded—I may say more utterly absurd—than the one which he has invented for the purpose of this particular occasion. Then, the honorable gentleman went on to speak in very offensive terms of myself as the head of the Canterbury land ring, which had made laws to keep the people out of their lands. Now, Sir, he is the only honorable member from whom we have heard of such a thing as a Canterbury land ring. The Canterbury lands have been open for sale, with the exception of very fractional portions, for free selection, at £2 an acre, and every man who has bought land there has paid £2 an acre for it. For every acre I bought I paid £2, and very dear at the price a great deal of it was. The honorable gentleman says we are land monopolists, and so on. I ask honorable members to look at the statistics of the colony, and they will find that, in proportion to area, in the District of Canterbury there are fewer large estates than in any other part of the colony; that the average size of the holdings on the whole is less; and that the amount of land brought under cultivation is larger in proportion to that purchased than in any other part of the colony. Tested, therefore, by their results—tested by the extent to which they have attained the great object of land laws, namely, promoting the beneficial occupation of the land—I contend, without fear of contradiction, that the Canterbury land laws have been the most successful in the colony. I admit that in some parts of Canterbury there are exceptions to the rule. When the Canterbury Association was founded, it had given to it authority over what was called the Canterbury Block—that is, what is now the central portion of the District of Canterbury. To the north and south of that, within the boundaries of the district, there are considerable tracts of land which were not under the authority of the Canterbury Association. When the Constitution Act was introduced, the Canterbury Association was still in existence. A

clause was introduced into the Constitution Act providing that the power of the Queen to make land laws and regulations might be delegated to the Governor; and this was done. The central portion of Canterbury was, however, exempted from the operation of the honorable gentleman's law-making power. What was the result? The honorable gentleman, before he left the colony, made laws for the sale and disposal of the waste lands of the Crown in New Zealand; but those laws did not extend to Canterbury. The people of Canterbury availed themselves of the clause in the Constitution Act to prevent those regulations of the Governor's being introduced. At the first election for Superintendent of the Province of Canterbury that question was fought out—whether we should maintain what was then called the "sufficient price" for land, or introduce Sir George Grey's land regulations. The candidate who supported the retention of the "sufficient price," and the exclusion of Sir George Grey's regulations, was elected by a large majority. The consequence was, that a large and central part of Canterbury was saved from those regulations. Well, now, what was the result? Under Sir George Grey's regulations land was sold at 5s. or 10s. an acre. The only large and valuable estates bought at a low price in Canterbury have been bought outside the Canterbury Block, under Sir George Grey's regulations. The honorable gentleman referred to the County of Cheviot the other night, and said that it was a county in possession of three landholders. That may be true. The largest of those landowners possesses a princely property, which he obtained at an average of 7s. 6d. an acre. I have been informed, and I am authorized to state, that that gentleman was in South Australia when these land regulations were issued. Finding that he could not there buy large blocks of land, as soon as he saw these regulations of Sir George Grey's he said, "New Zealand is the place for me to go to now." It was these regulations which brought him to this colony, and it was under them that he obtained 80,000 acres of very good land at 7s. 6d. an acre. He endeavoured to obtain land within the Canterbury Block, in which the price of land was £2 an acre. He made a proposal to the provincial authorities—I was then a member of the Provincial Council—a proposal to give us 20s. an acre for 20,000 acres of land. Although we were very poor, and wanted money for roads and bridges and a variety of purposes, we would not sell 20,000 acres of land for £20,000; we refused the offer. We said, "No: that will not conduce to the beneficial occupation of the land. We will keep our price at £2 an acre." Then that gentleman went outside the Canterbury District, and took the benefit of Sir George Grey's regulations. For less than £20,000 he obtained, not 20,000 acres, but 80,000 acres of very good land. And yet the honorable member comes here and has, I must say, the audacity to assert that we have made laws for giving persons large estates—that we have favoured land monopoly. If there is one man more than another, in the whole history of this colony, who has acted so as to favour the obtaining of large estates at

low prices, it is the honorable gentleman himself. The honorable gentleman says this Ministry is a Government that favours a landed aristocracy, and so on. I ask honorable gentlemen to look at the members of this Government. Who are they? My honorable friends the Minister of Lands, the Colonial Treasurer, and the Native Minister—the greater part of them are simply farmers. The Minister for Public Works says he never bought an acre of Crown land in his life. The others I have mentioned are hardworking farmers: they belong to a class formerly called “cockatoos.” They are a Ministry of cockatoos, if they are anything. It is perfectly absurd to say we are a landed aristocracy. With regard to myself, I think I can afford to treat the honorable gentleman's charges very lightly. I will say no more; I will not indulge in strong language. I have lived and laboured in the Province of Canterbury now for five-and-twenty years, and my actions have been before the public there. My works and my faults—which God knows have been many—have always been before the public; and I can appeal to the people whether I am chargeable with one scintilla of the crimes which the honorable member has laid to my charge. They are base slanders. I have no reason whatever to regret—I have no reason whatever to complain of—the manner in which the people of Canterbury have treated me. They have crowded upon me every local office which I could fill. Honorable gentlemen from Canterbury on the Opposition benches know that, and will not deny it. If I had committed all the wrongs the honorable gentleman says I have done—if my five-and-twenty years' career has been such as he describes—does he think the intelligent people of Canterbury would have treated me as they have done? No; it is a slander. We shall have these slanders repeated again and again, but I shall always treat them with the contempt they deserve. I feel that great allowance is to be made for the honorable gentleman, who stands at the present time in a very unenviable position. I will say as little as I can about that position. No man ever came into any deliberative Assembly with greater opportunities for acquiring a name, for being largely useful, and for doing good to his fellow-men. He came with the prestige of long and distinguished public services; he came with an influence—a ready-made influence—over his fellow-men which very few possess; he came with the abundant leisure which ample means bestow; he had not the hard work to do which we farmers have to perform, and had not to engage in the employments which take up our time; he came gifted with an eloquence such as few mortals possess; and, after four years in Parliament and two years in power as Prime Minister, what is the position in which the honorable gentleman finds himself? He is deposed. But is he deposed by his opponents? To have fallen in a fair fight, and to be deposed from power by political opponents differing from him in principles, is no inglorious fall. But to be deposed by, and at the hands of, true and faithful friends—at the hands of those who have been working for the same principles, who have been associated with him during these

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years—to be told by them that their cause is ruined unless he retires—that is humiliation indeed. The honorable gentleman says now that his task is done—his work is done; he has borne tribute to the liberality of our measures; he is relegated to obscurity as a political outcast. For these reasons I make great allowance for the position in which the honorable gentleman is placed. I can conceive no circumstance which could make that defeat more humiliating than the fact that the relegation of the honorable gentleman to obscurity as a political outcast is the act of his own friends and supporters. Sir, I now turn most gladly from an unwelcome task. It is one I would have gladly avoided, but it was the honorable gentleman who imposed it upon me. I see opposite me the honorable member for Dunstan. I am very sorry, considering the friendly relations which existed between us until a very recent period, that the honorable gentleman should have thought it necessary, not merely to vote against us, but to speak against us in the severe terms which he thought right to employ. The honorable gentleman denounced us with unmeasured severity. He went the length of accusing us of having stolen the family plate—plate with the crest of Sir George Grey upon it; but before he got ten words further he described it as Brummagem plate. I can assure the honorable gentleman that these Liberal measures are not stolen—they are not Brummagem; they are our own measures—they are the genuine and sterling article. We mean to carry these measures; we mean to let the country have the benefit of them, and I have no doubt they will be gladly accepted by the people. One of his charges against the present Government is, that it contains so large an element of the “continuous Ministry,” which so long unsuccessfully administered the affairs of this colony. Well, it is passing strange that such a statement should come from the honorable gentleman. From what I recollect of the history of this House, that “continuous Ministry” had the advantage not only of the vote of the honorable gentleman—not only of his general support—but it had the advantage of the active exertions of the honorable gentleman as “whip” until a short time before its fall. Under these circumstances, there has taken place a revolution in the opinions of my honorable friend which it is somewhat difficult to account for.

Mr. PYKE.—I was behind the scenes.

Mr. HALL.—I do not think that mends the case. Does he mean to say that he supported behind the scenes a Ministry which he believes ought not to be supported at all? We feel the honorable gentleman's censure much, because we know the purity and brightness of the patriotic flame which burns in his breast, and the unwearied unselfishness with which he has laboured in this House. He wound up his speech by saying that we sat here “ignominious, but contented.” The honorable gentleman's allusion was rather unfortunate. In the first place, it was not a correct quotation, because the real words of the famous orator are, “They sit infamous and contented under the grateful shadow of an impending pension.”

Mr. PYKE. — The whole truth should not always be told.

Mr. HALL. — Well, we will tell the truth. The honorable gentleman recently crossed the floor of this House. As he did so I thought I saw a shadow of a Ministerial portfolio hovering over him, and as he took his seat the shadow of this Ministerial portfolio settled on his head; and I thought to myself, Yes, there he sits—shall I say infamous?—infamous, and contented under the grateful shadow of an impending portfolio. Then, Sir, the honorable gentleman wound up his glowing peroration with the words, "Where are the scandals that were to be raked up? We have heard nothing of them." I will tell the honorable gentleman where the scandals are. When the next Ministry is formed, if the honorable gentleman is a member of that Ministry, there will be the scandal. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart). —

Mr. DE LAUTOUR. — I rise to a point of order. I was unwilling to interrupt the honorable gentleman sooner; but I understand that the debate which was spoken to the other night was on the adjournment of the House. The Minister of Lands wound it up and spoke in defence of the Government, on the ground that the Premier could not reply. This is not a continuation of the debate in which the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) spoke, any more than it is a continuation of the debate in which the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) and the honorable member for Dunstan spoke. The Minister of Lands, when he got up, said the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) always took the opportunity of speaking when his adversary could not reply. I was quite aware that the other honorable members, as well as the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart), could defend themselves; but this will open up a debate all round.

Mr. WAKEFIELD. — My recollection of the matter is this: that the Minister of Lands said the Premier could not speak then without losing his right of reply; and I understand that after the honorable gentleman has finished his present speech he will not have the right of reply.

Mr. PYKE. — I have not the slightest desire to interrupt the Premier; but, if I had chosen to do so, I might have called your attention, Sir, to the fact that in his remarks in the present debate he is referring to an entirely different debate.

Mr. SPEAKER. — I was not aware that the Premier was referring to another debate; I thought it was the same debate. Of course, if the honorable gentleman is referring to a different debate, he will not be in order in continuing his remarks in that direction. I should have checked him, but I thought it was the same debate.

Mr. HALL. — I asked you, Sir, before I rose, whether I should be at liberty to refer to remarks made in the course of the debate on the adjournment of the House, because those remarks were all directed to this one subject of the passing of the Electoral Bill; and I understood I was in order in referring to those remarks. The debate has been a somewhat irregular one. The whole

of the speeches have really had reference to this one subject, and it has been practically one debate. I was about to reply to the honorable member for Dunedin City—not at all, I assure the honorable gentleman, in an unpleasant manner—but I submit myself to your ruling, Sir, whether I am at liberty to refer to this.

Mr. SPEAKER. — I understood the Premier to ask me whether, having spoken on the proposed adjournment of the debate on "the previous question," he would now be at liberty to speak to the main question; and I signified my acquiescence in that course. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) has not spoken in this debate, and you cannot refer to any remarks he made during a previous debate.

Mr. HALL. — The honorable gentleman raised the question—and I am very glad he has given me an opportunity of referring to it—whether I ought not to have endeavoured to bring about a coalition. He said, and I took that as his justification—

Mr. STEWART. — Reconstruction.

Mr. HALL. — Does the honorable gentleman mean a reconstruction without a coalition—a reconstruction from the side of the House against which the vote of no-confidence was directed? Surely he did not mean that; and I do not think that would have suited my honorable friend. That has been the cry—that has been the only shred of an argument against the present Government—that the Ministry is not constituted as the House intended it to be constituted. If my resolution had been passed without any significant declaration from these benches, there might be something in that argument; but honorable members will recollect that when the late Minister for Native Affairs spoke—and he spoke last in debate—he declared, not once or twice, but over and over again, that no members of the Government would consent to any coalition, and that if a Government had to be constructed it must be constructed out of the ranks of the Opposition. That was the warning the honorable gentleman gave us; that was the argument by which he endeavoured to induce honorable members not to vote for my motion: that we should be thrown entirely—to use his own words—upon our own resources. Therefore I think there could have been no mistake, on the part of any honorable gentleman who voted for my resolution, as to its meaning and as to its effect. Immediately after that, with those words ringing in our ears, we went to a division, carried the resolution, and the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) voted for it. Therefore I say the honorable gentleman is guilty of the grossest inconsistency when he now comes down and condemns us for not having done what it was understood at the time we were not to attempt. I am anxious to put this point clearly, because that is really the only argument in favour of the proposed motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers. I may say, Sir, that when I gave notice of the no-confidence motion I did hope for the co-operation of members not entirely of our own party. I

believe that that would have been a good thing for the colony. What we want at the present time is a strong Government; and I did hope that honorable gentlemen would have risen above party considerations—no, I cannot call them party considerations, because they are not really party considerations—and have been willing to do that which I believe the good of the colony called them to do. What is the position of parties in this House at the present time? We have on the one side a large and compact party supporting the Government, who are one in spirit, one in mind, one in action. We have on the other side of the House two parties. An honorable gentleman near me says “Three.” I do not think there are quite so many as that, although there may, perhaps, be a middle party. I call the party on our side the independent Liberal party—the party of independent Liberals. We are not dependent upon anybody. On the other side of the House are two parties: one which, without offence, I may call “Greyites”—those who follow, and have been elected by the influence of, the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey). Combined with them at present are the party who were not elected by the influence of the honorable gentleman, and who call themselves Liberals, but whom I must, in contradistinction to ourselves, call the “dependent” Liberals. They are entirely dependent on Sir George Grey. They cannot move hand or foot without him. If they come into office, they will owe every day and hour of their political existence to his support and toleration. They are emphatically “dependent” Liberals. We have, on the one side then, independent Liberals, and on the other side a combination of two parties—“Greyites” and dependent Liberals. Now, the two sides of the House are about evenly divided.

Hon. MEMBERS.—“No.” “Vote.”

Mr. HALL.—I believe that when we go to a vote we shall have a majority. Of this I am sure, that we have a majority in the country. The honorable gentlemen must not lay the flattering unction to their souls that we have not a majority in the country, because we have.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Try it.

Mr. HALL.—The country has just gone through the turmoil of a general election. We have no wish to subject it again to that inconvenience, if the government of the country can be well carried on without it. The good government of the country, however, is superior to every consideration. Therefore I believe it would have been well if the dependent Liberals—between whom and ourselves I cannot discover, from speeches or writings or anything else, any real, *bona fide* differences of political principle—it would have been well if they had shaken themselves free from the trammels of a combination in which they happened to be entangled, and had assisted us—or allowed us to assist them, I do not care which—and given themselves the benefit of independence: released themselves from the dependent position in which they now are, and allowed a sufficient number to come over to enable us to form a strong Government. That was the view with

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which we proposed the motion of no-confidence in the terms in which it was tabled. I am not ashamed of that. On the contrary, I think that in proposing to make that concession we were doing what honest and patriotic men had a perfect right to do, and I am very sorry indeed that the opportunity has been lost. Now, Sir, I am rather in a difficulty, because I do not know what arguments are going to be brought against this Government. As no arguments have yet been brought forward, I will go a little further into the question of why the Government should not be displaced. I will point out what the result of the displacement of the present Government would be. It would practically mean a restoration of the old Government.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the honorable gentleman goes into the question of the no-confidence motion every other honorable member will be entitled to do so.

Mr. HALL.—Then I will not go into it, Sir.

Mr. GISBORNE.—Let the motion come on, and then you can go into it.

Mr. HALL.—I will say very little more. With regard to those measures which are now before the House, I will say only that they are moderate measures, put into a thoroughly practical form. Honorable gentlemen opposite have not only not condemned them, but, so far as they have spoken, have expressed their approval of them: the late Prime Minister himself said his task was now done. These measures are before the House and before the country. These are the measures which it is said the country has been sighing for. They are submitted to the House for approval. Now, I ask gentlemen who really are sincere in their liberal professions—I ask those members who think it is an evil thing for the country to have this source of agitation constantly dangled before it—I ask those honorable members who deplore the manner in which the late Government has dealt with these measures, and prevented their being in operation at the present time—I ask those honorable members who fear that in the event of further struggles for place and power these liberal measures may be lost—I ask those honorable members who think that the peace, order, and good government of the country are of more importance than mere struggles for power and place—not to allow such struggles to stand in the way of these measures being considered and passed into law during the present session, but to do something which will be infinitely more advantageous to the colony, and which will redound infinitely more to their credit, than will be the further indulgence in this useless, and, I think, unjustifiable, struggle for place and for power.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I shall not detain the House at any great length, but I think it is due to myself that I should reply to some of the observations of the honorable gentleman who has just sat down. The honorable gentleman says we have a “cockatoo” Government; and as I listened to his wailings with regard to the attacks which he said had been made upon him, the thought occurred to me that I had often seen a cockatoo sitting upon a high perch, reflecting

to himself, and saying "Poor cocky." I pity the state of such an unhappy bird, but I do not pity the state of the honorable gentleman, for he spoke with very great confidence, and with an eloquence which was most deluding, although I hope it did not lead any one astray. He stated, reading from Todd, that it was the undoubted right of the Governor, or the Crown—I will drop the word "Governor"—to select its own Prime Minister; and he went on to say that I had said that the Crown had selected him, and that he was the Prime Minister—the chosen of the Crown, not of this House. Now, he absolutely proved the correctness of what I said. My statement to the House was, that we, the House of Representatives, determining that a strong Government should be formed, had taken certain steps on our side after the vote of want of confidence had been passed. That vote was a very peculiar one. It was to this effect: that the House has no confidence in the Ministry "as at present constituted." It was made clear to us, and we are satisfied upon the point now, that had the Governor given effect to the decision of the House a strong Ministry could have been constituted, and could now be constituted. It can be constituted within two hours, and the country can be governed without Todd. But our right of choosing our own Government was denied us, and the Crown selected, in pursuance of what is said to be its constitutional right, its own chosen Prime Minister. And there he sits: not the chosen of this House, not commanding a majority of this House, but maintaining office in spite of this House. That was my argument; and I say that the honorable gentleman himself conclusively proved that I was right. I say, further, that it is inconvenient that the prerogative of the Crown should under certain circumstances be exercised; that it is very rarely exercised; and that upon this occasion it was most unfortunately exercised, to the great detriment of the welfare of this country. The honorable gentleman then went on to explain at great length that I was formerly very much to blame in accepting the resignation of honorable gentlemen who held seats in the Legislative Council. But I carefully guarded myself upon this subject. I said this: that I thought one resignation might be admissible, and might not be construed into a gross breach of faith with the Crown; and I then went on to show that it was wrong to use the Legislative Council for the convenience of parties in order that a man might slip into it when he could not get a seat for a constituency, and that when he found he could get a seat for a constituency he should be able to slip out of it again; that he had no right to use the Council for such a purpose, and that to do so was a breach of faith with the Crown. I have a right to my own opinion upon that point, whatever may be the opinions of others. That is my deliberate opinion, and I am content that the future historian should judge between us. I know to a certainty which way the verdict will go. I know to a certainty that the future people of this country will hardly believe it possible that a state of things should have been al-

lowed to exist which would permit the honorable gentleman, for party purposes—for the purposes of a class—to come down to this House a second time from the Legislative Council. That was my statement, Sir, and that is the statement the honorable gentleman did not answer. I now pass on to this other point: The honorable gentleman objected to cheap land having been allowed to be purchased in New Zealand, and he said that cheap land necessarily led to the creation of large properties. That I deny. The honorable member for Waikouaiti may say "Oh!"—

Mr. McLEAN.—I never opened my mouth.

Sir G. GREY.—I am informed it was the honorable member for Bruce. Well, Sir, I will not answer him. I say the land ought to be cheap, so that poor men may be enabled to hold property, and so as to prevent the existence of those large estates which are ruinous to the country. If the honorable gentleman had put a tax upon land, as was the original intention in this country—a tax which I was recommended from Home to put on—a tax which I always contemplated, and always believed would be established—in that case it would have been possible, as is the case in the United States, to buy land at a dollar an acre. Under such a system, every man could acquire a farm as soon as he had got a very small modicum of money, and it would leave money in his pocket for the improvement of the farm. And it would be possible, under that system, to prevent the accumulation of these great properties. Holding that opinion, I maintain that I was a benefactor in attempting to introduce such a system. I also say that it is possible to put an apparently high price upon the land, and so to arrange your land laws that, in fraud of the public rights, large tracts of country may be occupied and enjoyed, and great profit made out of them, upon the payment of a very small sum indeed by the holders. It is quite possible to proclaim to the world, as the honorable gentleman did, that the land in Canterbury has always been open for sale at £2 an acre, and it is quite possible to "gridiron" it, and shut up large tracts which cannot be bought at £2 an acre. It is equally possible to wrong the public in the same way under the pre-emptive right system. It must be evident that men who are allowed to occupy large runs at a small price, and to shut them up and keep them in their own hands under the "gridiron" system by giving £2 an acre for parts of them, making enormous profits out of those parts, really get the runs for nothing. These two systems form a strong contrast, and my charge was, that he had lent himself to the shutting-up of land under the "gridiron" system, the pre-emptive right system, and the run system, which was established in the Canterbury Block, and afterwards extended over the whole country; and that was my accusation against the honorable member for Aron. I said that he, in assisting to extend the Canterbury pastoral leases for an additional ten years, had done a wrong to the whole colony, because under the amended land laws the Crown lands were common property, and if these runs were fairly broken up and submitted to competition in 1880, as they ought to be, an enormous boon would then

be given to the people of the colony, which those honorable gentlemen have shut them out from. That was my complaint—my accusation; and that accusation has not been answered. The honorable gentleman said a few evenings ago that I had challenged him to meet me upon the platform at Christchurch to discuss this subject. That is true. I asked him to name the time and place. I said I would go to Canterbury or any other part of the country he chose to name, and discuss these points with him; but he evaded me and gave no reply: and yet the other night he said he went to Canterbury and attended my election meetings, that he had shown himself in the body of the hall, and that I had never dared to attack him. I was not there to attack him. I was there to explain great political principles to the people, and to attack him was absolutely unworthy of what I was bent upon. What had a single individual like that to do with great political principles? Of all the pieces of arrogant boasting, that surpasses anything I have ever heard. Great masses of people were there, anxious to drink in instruction upon great principles and great questions vitally affecting their interest; and I hoped that he too was there to take a lesson on those subjects. I did not think he was there to tempt me to make an attack upon him. Such a thought never entered my head: the only feeling I had in regard to him was that I pitied him for being squeezed. I say again, Sir, that that point has never been answered. I say the landed aristocracy of Canterbury did seize upon land which was absolute capital. They pretend it is not capital. I say that in getting possession of these runs they got possession of a large amount of public capital. Grass was capital; because it could be immediately turned into beef, and mutton, and wool, and the most valuable products of the country. Any one who had a run could get anything he wanted on credit. They made their fortunes, and in many instances, in my belief, they made them unfairly, and against the public interests of the country. Sir, we are now appealed to in the most moving terms not to interrupt or interfere with this Government.

Mr. HALL.—No. With the liberal measures.

Sir G. GREY.—Not to interfere with this Government, Sir. Oh! how can honorable gentlemen say such things! They know in their own hearts that they say what is wrong. Why, Sir, the other night an act was committed—I do not know how to describe it—such as has never before been performed in this House. The Treasurer told the House that the credit of the country required supplies to be passed; that they were coming down next day with an Imprest Supply Bill, in support of the credit of the country and of the pressing needs of the public service—in support of the pressing needs of the public service: I repeat those words. It was necessary to pass a resolution under the Revenues Bill—that was their plea—to give them the means of getting at the £200,000 provided for by that Bill in order to support the credit of the country and the pressing needs of the public service. What, then,

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took place next day? The Colonial Treasurer came down, and had with him a message from the Governor to this House; and the message from the Governor was to recommend us to make provision for the public necessities of the country.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think that the question of a message from the Governor which has not been presented to the House is a matter which ought to be introduced in the present debate.

Sir G. GREY.—They have gone into all these subjects, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I stopped the Premier when he was discussing the want-of-confidence motion, because it was not relevant to the present debate. The honorable member for the Thames is also introducing another matter altogether foreign to the discussion.

Major ATKINSON.—I have not the slightest objection to the honorable gentleman proceeding.

Sir G. GREY.—This is a matter of public policy of the greatest importance. It is a question of the privileges of this House. The question before us is, whether a certain Bill should be allowed to be gone on with; and I say that Bill cannot be allowed to be gone on with unless these matters are discussed.

Mr. HALL.—I submit, Sir, that that was precisely the reason why I was stopped. I at once accepted the indication of your opinion that I should not go on with the want-of-confidence discussion, and stopped. I hope the honorable gentleman will take the same course.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must request the honorable member for the Thames not to introduce the matter to which he has just been alluding.

Sir G. GREY.—Then, Sir, I will move, That this is a question of privilege—a question of privilege of the greatest importance.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot see what question of privilege can arise out of the remarks you were making in respect of the message you have referred to.

Sir G. GREY.—Perhaps you will delay your ruling, Sir, and allow me to explain in what the question of privilege lies.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Of course, if you have any further explanation to make, I shall be happy to hear it.

Sir G. GREY.—My explanation is this: Before us is at present the adjourned debate as to whether a certain Bill should be introduced or not. I say that Bill should not be introduced until the question of supplies is gone on with; and I will address myself to that point.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not see the point of privilege.

Sir G. GREY.—I will put it in this other way: First, I say the question is, Is a certain Bill now to be introduced and gone on with? To that I say it ought not to be gone on with; and I will proceed to show why.

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is no reason why you should not do that.

Sir G. GREY.—The reason I say that Bill ought not to be gone on with now is, that we should first of all deal with supply. That is the

important matter. A message from the Governor has been intercepted, in which the Governor himself requires us to take up supply. We have been told that supply is absolutely necessary for the country, and I have heard upon the very best authority that even labourers are left unpaid at the present time—workmen, Sir, whose wages are of the utmost importance to them. I am therefore of opinion that this debate should be delayed until the question of supply is gone on with; and we have a right to go on with supply, because the Colonial Treasurer has himself stated to the House the necessity under which this country labours for supply being immediately granted. The Governor, acquiescing in that view, has charged those honorable gentlemen to deliver a message to this House, which message is to the effect that we should make provision for the exigencies of the public service. The way in which the Government meet that message is to come down to the House and say, "We will go on with supply, which we have reported as being so necessary, upon this condition: that you do not interrupt us by a motion which will cause the Governor to remedy the grievances under which you complain that you labour; and, if you promise to make no complaint of us to the Governor, under those conditions we will go on with supply, but we will not otherwise do so." If you consider that point, Sir, you will see that it is a reversal of all that has taken place up to this day in the history of the Anglo-Saxon race. —(Laughter.)—The Colonial Treasurer laughs, as he always does when he knows no reply can be given to observations made; but these are truths that cannot be got over. What has been the custom always in English Parliaments with regard to supplies? I go back to our remotest history. The custom has been this: that the Crown, anxious to pay troops—perhaps to keep the people down—anxious to get money for its own personal expenses, anxious to get money for its great Civil list and its numerous pensioners, comes down to the House of Commons and asks for supplies; to which the House of Commons replies, "We will give no supplies until our grievances are redressed." Now, what has been done here is a complete reversal of that system. We have no standing army here, no great body of pensioners. The Crown is secured in its Civil list, and does not want money for its own expenses. The people alone require money—our contractors, and the poor, wretched people employed by the Government. And the people who refuse supplies are the Government. They say, "We will not allow these people to be paid, we will not let the contractors get their money, we will not allow the public service to be carried on, unless you promise to make no complaint against us to the Crown." I say that such a thing was never heard of before—that a proposition more selfish, more—I do not know whether the word "cowardly" is parliamentary, so I will not use it; but I do say that anything like this has never before been heard of in history, and no precedent can be shown for it. Let it be considered. The Treasurer came down the other day and said, "I want supplies; I ask for sup-

plies; I am here all ready to go on with supply"—he did not say, "The Governor has commanded me to ask for them;" but he dared not stand up and ask for them unless he had been commanded—"but you must promise not to meet me with an adverse motion. If you do, let the labourers want their money, let the contractors want their money. That is not what we look to; we only look to remain undisturbed here: and unless you promise to leave us undisturbed no supplies shall be given." I say, under those circumstances, we should not allow this Bill to be gone on with until supplies are asked for, and these people paid. The passage of those Bills is certain. Honorable gentlemen are so pledged to them on both sides that it is simply a question of half an hour to put them through.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—The Government may put up their whip to interrupt me. That appears to be the special duty of the Government whip—to cry "No, no," and constantly interrupt; but I say it is unworthy of the whip and unworthy of the Government, and it is a breach of the order and decorum of the House that honorable gentlemen should go on in that way.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—Surely I have a right to say "No" if I dissent from an honorable gentleman's statement? I am not pledged to these liberal measures, and never was.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is not right to interrupt honorable members when they are speaking. I will see that the honorable gentleman is not interrupted.

Sir G. GREY.—I thank you, Sir. Trying to resume the thread of my argument, I think I have proved that supplies have been stopped in a most unprecedented manner by the Government; and we, on this side, are taking the position of the Government, while the Government are really acting as an Opposition. Under these circumstances, we say that until supplies are granted no business shall go on. We say, "First of all provide for the necessities of the country;" and we are here, with a great majority, able to do it without the aid and assistance of those honorable gentlemen. By your ruling, Sir, and by the customs of the House, we are forbidden to move for supplies. They must be introduced by message from the Governor. A message from the Governor is in the pockets and minds of those honorable gentlemen. Let it be produced. Let the House have that message, saying the Governor recommends that supplies be granted, and they shall be forthcoming in half an hour. Honorable gentlemen around me will say whether that shall not be the case, and whether I do not rightly interpret their views. Then the distress I hear of can be terminated to-morrow morning, if those honorable gentlemen please. But we will make no concessions upon that subject, because we think they deserve to be removed from those benches, as they cannot command a majority of the House. They cannot properly carry on the business of the country; and I think we are doing our duty to the country by insisting upon that business being properly carried on. I speak nothing for myself—I have no

personal interest in the matter; but I speak on behalf of what I know to be for the good of New Zealand at large. I say that the Crown itself ought to require it. It is useless to say that the Crown has no knowledge of what takes place in this House. It has knowledge. It acts, occasionally, upon that knowledge; and if ever there was a period of time in which the Crown ought to act on its knowledge—when the Crown ought to have a Ministry chosen by itself, and acceptable to the majority of this House—I believe that time has arrived, and that the people should be rescued from the misery under which a good many of them suffer at the present time. I was told on Saturday, on authority which I cannot doubt, that even the poor unemployed who had been put upon the public works had not been paid the money due to them; so that they got no advantage from being so employed, because their work had been taken from them up to the present time without any payment being made for their services. That is a wrong state of things to go on. Those gentlemen, sacrificing all personal feelings, all party feelings, ought this evening to come down to the House, at half-past seven, and immediately demand that supplies be given; and let the vote be taken which they so much dread, and supplies be given at the same time. The honorable gentlemen have said this: "We have been accused of representing a landed aristocracy"—if you can call it an aristocracy, such as arises in this country; and then they go on to say that all who sit on those benches are poor men. I say they are not. I say that the Hon. the Premier himself is a member of the landed aristocracy, and that another gentleman sitting on the Treasury bench is a large runholder, although he has been called a "cockatoo."

Hon. MEMBERS.—Name.

Sir G. GREY.—But even that was misrepresenting what I said the other night. What I then said was, that almost every gentleman who spoke in the early part of the debate either represented a large landed property in himself, or he was the agent for large landed proprietors, or else he was a man who was deeply concerned in the purchase of land from the Natives, and anxious to obtain large properties from them; and this I do feel to be a great grievance upon this subject. It has been a matter of serious thought with me as to whether I should not bring in a law to prevent such persons having a seat in the House. We have a law which provides that contractors shall not have a seat in this House—a law by which public servants are not allowed to sit in this House—and the whole scope and spirit of that law is this: that no person who may exercise an influence upon Ministers to compel Ministers to give them large sums of money or contracts shall have a seat in this House of Representatives of New Zealand; but in this House of Representatives now sit representatives of enormous land claims, who can bring great pressure to bear upon the Government—the agents of persons who represent such land claims, people who have sought to get tracts of land from the Government, and who probably will seek to do so again. No pressure has before been brought

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to bear on any Government in any civilized community such as has been brought to bear upon the Government of New Zealand at the present time; for, under the system of Orders in Council, the Government have the power to at once make laws to grant land to the value, I might say, of £100,000—at any rate, £10,000, £20,000, £30,000; and those persons, having a seat in this House, can and do bring great pressure to bear upon the Government. At least, I can speak for the Government I was in. I was told, as I would not yield, I must make up my mind to meet my fate. I did make up my mind to meet it; and meet it I did. Then this further difficulty exists: that the Government has power of putting Proclamations over certain blocks of Native land, preventing the Natives from selling to private individuals, and it has also the power of removing those Proclamations from certain parts of the land by a mere stroke of the pen; and, unless such Proclamations are removed when private interests desire it, the Government is certain to bring down upon itself the enmity of those gentlemen who wish it to be done. It is clear that such persons should not have seats in this House. It is easy to say that they would not do it. But suppose a Government were to refuse to accede to such a request, what would you think, or what would a Government feel, if it found that those persons to whom requests had been refused were to become its bitter enemies? I feel in my case that justice will at length be done. I feel that when the pigeon-holes, as they are called, have been routed out, it will be found that persons sent here as representatives of the people are really representatives of bitter foes to me. I had done no wrong myself—I did not flinch; but it was necessary some one should be made a scapegoat of, and I unhesitatingly met my fate. But I hope a law will be passed this session which shall say this: that, in addition to contractors being excluded from this House, no man who has a claim against the Government for either a long lease, or a Crown grant to Native land the title to which is doubtful, but which the Government can settle at once by issuing an Order in Council, shall be allowed to sit in this House; also that no person seeking to buy Native lands over which the Government have issued a Proclamation to protect their rights, shall be allowed to occupy a seat in this House. I feel certain nothing but that can secure the independence of New Zealand; nothing but that can secure the independence of the House, and enable a Minister to lay down his head in peace at night, knowing that, having done his duty, he is safe in his position, because under present circumstances the fact of a Minister having done his duty must be the cause of his destruction as a politician in this country. In stating that, I am stating that which is well known to be the case.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—I am stating that which all here may know to be the case.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—One gentleman on our side says "No," and I think I heard a "No" from another quarter. I am sure the honorable gentle-

man who says "No" must feel that what I am stating is the case: if not, I cannot attribute much knowledge of the affairs of the country to him. It is impossible that any one who considers this question cannot be acquainted with what I have stated. The facts are contained in papers.

Mr. McLEAN.—I rise to a point of order. The honorable gentleman has just referred to me. I said "No," because I did not know it to be the case.

Sir G. GREY.—Then I simply state he ought to have known it. If he is so eager to ferret out scandals, so determined to get to the bottom of all these pigeon-holes, it is wonderful that these scandals should have escaped him. What microscopical eyes he has for small sins, and how blind to large offences against the country! For all these reasons I do think it is our bounden duty to take our stand upon this point. I am not the leader of a party; I am not aware of the precise things which are intended to be done; but this I do say: It is the bounden duty of honorable gentlemen on this side of the House to say that until supplies are given nothing shall be gone on with. We are here able to form a strong Government, and the Crown shall know that. It is advisable to have a strong Government in this country, capable of carrying on the affairs of New Zealand to the advantage of the whole community; and such a Government ought to be formed without the least delay. I did not hesitate myself for one moment to stand out of the way when I was told that I was the obstacle to the formation of a Government of the necessary strength to conduct the affairs of New Zealand. Let those honorable gentlemen follow my example. Let them stand aside. Let the Government I speak of be formed this night. Let supplies be taken first, and then let the other fact be dealt with. Let the public business go on, and let the country be saved from this stain which has been cast upon it. If they do this they will reinstate themselves in the affections of the country and in the opinion of the House, and, moreover, will be more easy in their minds from a sense of right-doing.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

MR. HALL'S RESIGNATION OF HIS SEAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, before the House proceeds to the Orders of the day, I would ask honorable members' indulgence to say a few words so as to prevent a misapprehension arising from a statement made by the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) in regard to the acceptance of my resignation as a member of the Legislative Council. I wish to make the statement altogether apart from the debate upon which we were engaged this afternoon. The honorable gentleman stated—*Hansard* has not yet been circulated, but I am quite certain of the words—that he had not advised His Excellency to accept

my resignation. I felt it my duty to bring that statement to the knowledge of His Excellency, and His Excellency has been good enough to give me for my own use a memorandum of what took place upon the occasion of my resignation being discussed. I have that memorandum, and if it is the pleasure of the House—I think the House will be desirous of being informed of what did take place—I will now read it.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Would it not be well if the honorable member for the Thames were in his place?

Mr. HALL.—Certainly. I shall wait until he comes.

Mr. HISLOP.—Might I ask if we are to receive this communication by way of message?

Mr. HALL.—I was most distinct. I endeavoured to be as distinct as I could in saying that it is nothing of the kind: it is nothing at all of the kind. It is for the House to say whether it wishes me to read the document.

Mr. HISLOP.—I would not like to interfere in such a matter, but I think it has been laid down over and over again that the only way in which the Crown can communicate with this House, in a matter of this kind, is by way of message; and I think it is a very inconvenient practice to introduce, that any communication from the Crown or Governor should be made to the House except by way of message.

Mr. HALL.—It is not a question of a communication from the Crown at all. As the honorable member for the Thames is now present, I will go on to say that I wish to make a statement for the purpose of removing a misapprehension which might arise out of a statement made by him the other evening, with reference to the circumstances under which my resignation as a member of the Legislative Council was accepted. I refer to this apart from the debate in which we were engaged this afternoon, so that it may not be a matter of debate. The honorable member stated that he had not advised His Excellency to accept my resignation. I mentioned that statement to His Excellency. His Excellency has given to me—to make what use I may think proper of—a memorandum of what took place in reference to my resignation. As I believe the House will be desirous to have correct information on the subject, I submit to the House whether it is its pleasure that the memorandum should be read.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Read.

Mr. HALL.—Then I understand I have the permission of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Is it the pleasure of the House that the Premier have permission to read the memorandum?

Hon. MEMBERS.—Read.

Mr. SPEAKER.—As there is no dissentient voice, the honorable gentleman can proceed with reading the document.

Mr. HALL.—The memorandum is as follows:—

"MEMORANDUM for the Hon. JOHN HALL.

"Sir George Grey is reported to have said, when speaking of Mr. Hall's resignation of his seat in the Upper House, for the purpose of

taking a seat in the House of Representatives, 'I say that he ought not to have been allowed to resign his position in the Upper House without the Governor having been advised to receive his resignation. A resignation is not complete until the Governor approves of it, and I say the Governor, in having accepted his resignation without advice, meant that the putting him back into this House for the purpose of leading a party was a personal act. . . . If I had advised it, I should not have disclosed that advice. I did not advise it. I say, therefore, that he sits here as the personal representative of the Governor in this House. Sir, that is the case. Without that had been done, he could not have been here.'

"2. Any one reading that report would infer that the Governor had accepted Mr. Hall's resignation without the concurrence of his Ministers, and that the act was the personal act of the Governor, for which Ministers were not in any way responsible. But that is not the case. The facts are these:—

"3. Upon the 18th August, the Governor received a letter from Mr. Hall, tendering the resignation of his seat in the Legislative Council, and the same day sent it on to the Premier, with the following indorsement: 'For usual course. Has it been customary here for the Governor to accept such resignations by letter, or is the acceptance notified in the *Government Gazette*?—H. R. 18/8/79.'

"4. Upon the following day, the 19th August, the Premier called upon the Governor, his business being, as he stated, to speak about Mr. Hall's resignation of his seat in Council. The Premier said he considered such resignation a most improper proceeding, and opposed to the spirit and intention of the Constitution Act, as, the appointment being binding on the Crown for life, the obligation implied mutuality. He said Mr. Hall had twice before left the Council to stand for the House of Representatives, and that it was within his knowledge that that was the object of the present resignation. He said he had always deprecated such a proceeding, and, as he considered the necessity for the Governor's acceptance of the resignation gave the Governor a discretion in the matter, and enabled the Governor to judge of the propriety of the resignation, he could not advise, in a case like Mr. Hall's, that the resignation should be accepted. The Governor replied that the Constitution Act specified, 'It shall be lawful for any member of the Legislative Council to resign his seat;' and that the Electoral Acts imposed no disqualification upon a person standing for the House of Representatives on the ground of being an ex-member of the Legislative Council. He should therefore decline to lend himself to any device for placing one of the Premier's political opponents under a disability not imposed by law. If the proceeding were held to be improper, such a disqualification as having been a member of the Upper House should be specified by Act; and, pending legislation, the Governor would certainly refuse to be a party to such an unprecedented and strained exercise of a mere formal act of the Prerogative for party purposes. The Governor

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mentioned instances in which men had gone from the Lower to the Upper House, and back again to the Lower. The Premier admitted that there had been repeated instances in New Zealand of members of the Upper House resigning their seats and being subsequently elected members of the House of Representatives, and said that one of his then colleagues, Mr. Gisborne, had done so. But he (the Premier) disapproved so strongly of the proceeding, and had spoken against it so often in public, that, for the sake of his own consistency, he should feel obliged to record formally upon the papers his disapproval of Mr. Hall's proposal, and his advice that Mr. Hall's resignation be not accepted. He added that, although the Constitution Act left the acceptance to the Governor, every act of the Governor must be done under advice and Ministerial responsibility. The Governor replied that this view was undoubtedly sound, but that the Governor could always reject Ministerial advice, if he were prepared to face the constitutional consequences; and that, in this case, if such advice were tendered, he should unquestionably refuse it, which would leave the Premier with the constitutional alternative of resignation or acquiescence in the refusal. The Governor added that, unless the Premier were prepared to resign, he did not see how the tendering of formal advice would vindicate his character for political consistency. The Premier left, saying he would consult with such of his colleagues as were in Wellington, and let the Governor hear further on the subject.

"5. Upon the afternoon of the same day, the papers covering Mr. Hall's resignation were returned to the Governor from the Premier's office, without any adverse advice whatever thereon, and with the following indorsement: 'For His Excellency.—It has been customary here for the Colonial Secretary to notify the acceptance of his resignation to the resigning member. Resignations have been usually, though it appears not invariably, notified in the *Gazette*.—W. GISBORNE (in absence of the Colonial Secretary). 19th August, 1879.'

"6. Upon this the Governor made the following further indorsement: 'The Colonial Secretary is requested to inform Mr. Hall of my acceptance of his resignation, and to cause the usual notification to be inserted in the *Government Gazette*.—H. R. 19th August, 1879.'

"7. This was minuted by the Minister as follows: 'To be acted on.—W. GISBORNE. 20th August, 1879.' And the same day a letter was addressed to Mr. Hall, from the Colonial Secretary's Office, signed, 'W. Gisborne (in absence of the Colonial Secretary),' informing Mr. Hall of the Governor's acceptance of his tendered resignation.

"8. These facts show that Sir George Grey's statement—'I did not advise it'—was only half the truth. It is true he was averse to the step taken by Mr. Hall, and did not indorse on the papers the words, 'I advise that the resignation be accepted;' but he caused the Governor's memorandum, addressed to himself, to be returned by one of his colleagues, without any adverse advice, which was tantamount to the Premier's

formal acquiescence in the acceptance of Mr. Hall's resignation; and, such acceptance having been officially communicated to Mr. Hall by a Minister of the Crown, the Premier, and not the Governor, became, under the Constitution, solely responsible for the act.

"9. The Governor feels, however, in some doubt now as to the course that should be adopted in this matter. It is a constitutional maxim that the Crown ought not to notice debate in the Parliament; but, on the other hand, it is equally unconstitutional for the Governor's name to be brought into debate as it has been. No Minister or ex-Minister has a right to reveal in Parliament what has passed between the Crown and himself, without the express leave of the Crown; and, when Sir George Grey referred to things that had taken place between himself and the Governor, he ought to have been stopped at once by the inquiry, whether he had the Governor's permission to speak of them at all. As it is, a matter which is known fully only to the Governor and his late Premier has been alluded to by the latter in Parliament, without permission, and placed by him in a light which is not in accordance with the whole truth; whilst the Governor may possibly be held to be technically precluded, by the rules of parliamentary privilege, from refuting a charge which has in such an unconstitutional manner been brought against him by his late Minister.

"10. In these circumstances, the Governor desires to place on record in this memorandum a statement of all the facts connected with the acceptance of Mr. Hall's resignation of his seat in the Legislative Council, and to leave the present Premier free to make such use of them as he may think proper. "HERCULES ROBINSON.

"Wellington, 21st October, 1879."

Having received this memorandum from His Excellency the Governor, I thought it right, in order that the whole circumstances might be fully before this House, to ask permission of the House to read it. That permission having been granted, and the memorandum having been read, I do not propose to make any further remarks on the subject.

Mr. STEWART.—What is the date of it?

Mr. HALL.—It is dated Wellington, 21st October.

Mr. MOSS.—I presume the memorandum will be laid on the table. I have not heard one half of what was read by the Premier, and I trust he will lay it on the table of the House. I have seen the House insist upon letters from which honorable members have read being laid on the table.

Mr. HALL.—If the honorable member will move that the document be laid on the table, I shall have no objection.

Mr. MOSS.—I would rather not move that. I would rather see the honorable member lay it on the table.

Mr. HALL.—If the honorable member will move that it be laid on the table, I will consider the motion.

Mr. GISBORNE.—May I ask the Hon. the Premier whether His Excellency, in quoting

what Sir George Grey stated in the House, says from what report he took that statement?

Mr. HALL.—No, he does not.

Mr. GISBORNE.—Does the honorable gentleman know?

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. MOSS.—Then it is an unfortunate position for the honorable gentleman to be placed in. I would at once move that the memorandum be laid on the table. I should like very much to read it carefully; but I do not wish, when asked to make this motion, to do anything that might affect a breach of the privileges of this House. I should prefer leaving that to one of the leaders of the House. This is a question affecting the privileges of the House, and it is due to honorable members that the Premier should lay the document on the table without any motion being made.

Mr. FINN.—I consider that this document should be laid on the table. It is a most important memorandum, and one which requires the careful consideration of every honorable member. It is a memorandum from the Governor to the Premier, and should be laid on the table.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Do I understand the honorable member for Parnell to move that this document be laid on the table?

Mr. MOSS.—I should prefer that some leader of the House moved that it be laid on the table, if honorable members desire it.

Sir G. GREY.—I move, That the paper be laid on the table of the House, and be printed.

Major ATKINSON.—Can that question be put, without notice of motion having been given?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The House has a right to demand that any document read in the House should be laid on the table.

Mr. HALL.—I shall have great pleasure in laying the document on the table. It was from no unwillingness to do so, but from a delicate regard for the privileges of the House that I did not lay it on the table at once.

Mr. GISBORNE.—The question is, that the document be laid on the table of the House. I think this is a most serious precedent to establish. We are now admitting the comments of the Governor upon a speech delivered by one of the members of this House, quoted from an anonymous report. The memorandum does not state the report from which the quotation is made. It is not, I imagine, from *Hanard*, as it is not yet, I believe, published. We allow the Governor to enter this House in the position of debater of questions before the House. I thought the honorable gentleman would have taken the opportunity, when he spoke on this question, of stating what was the Governor's conception of the question raised by the honorable member for the Thames. I think it becomes a very serious precedent whether we should allow comments from His Excellency upon a debate which has not been concluded in this House—unfavourable comments on a report of an honorable member's speech—a report which, so far as we know, might quite incorrectly represent to His Excellency the Governor what was stated in this House.

Major ATKINSON.—I would point out that this is entirely the action of the House, and not

the action of my honorable friend at the head of the Government. My honorable friend stated that he had received a communication from the Governor, which undoubtedly, in his position as Premier, he had a right to receive, and which His Excellency had a right to communicate to him. The document referred to a matter in which His Excellency's name was wrongly used in the House. Ministers might have been considered culpable in not stopping the honorable member for the Thames when he made use of His Excellency's name. My honorable friend asked permission of the House to read the document. The House desired that it should be read. Therefore there is no question of privilege. My honorable friend hesitated to lay the document on the table, lest it might interfere with the privilege of the House. The House has desired that it should be laid on the table. The whole action has been the action of the House. Now that it has gone so far, I hope that this document will be printed, for the information of honorable members and of the country.

Sir G. GREY.—Perhaps I may be allowed to offer a few observations to the House on the paper itself. I think, as far as the Governor has stated what passed, his statement is as correct and fair as a statement of a person writing some time after the event can possibly be. I cannot admit that the Governor has stated everything that passed. I did not like to allude to what passed between the Governor and myself: I mean the documents that passed between us. I said the Governor did not state all that passed—that something most material regarding the circumstances of the case had not been stated. I am quite satisfied with what the Governor has stated. I am sure no one can consider that paper without feeling that I gave the Governor true advice, such as a faithful Adviser ought to give. I did not advise His Excellency to appoint Mr. Hall. The Ministry were under a vote of censure. If honorable members will refer to the documents laid before this House they will find that the Governor expressed himself in very strong terms with regard to us and that vote of censure—terms which I think were very improper. I think his words were, that we had been condemned by the House. I really forget the exact expression, but it made the impression upon my mind as being very unfriendly and improper. At the time this discussion took place between the Governor and myself, the elections were going on, and it was clearly our duty not to resign at that moment, and plunge the country in very great difficulties indeed. The course the Government took was simply this: The Governor admits that he refused to take our advice; he admits that he did not take our advice formally given—that he told us that we must retire from office—

Mr. HALL.—Or acquiesce.

Sir G. GREY.—That we must resign or acquiesce: I have no intention of misstating the terms used. I accept what the Governor says. He said to me, "You are adverse to Mr. Hall doing what he did before"—that is, using the Council for his own convenience. I say that was

my advice. If you will look at the papers you will see that that is what I have always stated. Then the Governor goes on to say that he replied, "I will not take your advice; if you do not acquiesce, you must resign." I believe I am right in stating that that is the position he took up. The Premier himself has said so.

Mr. HALL.—I will read that passage again:—

"The Governor replied that this view was undoubtedly sound, but that the Governor could always reject Ministerial advice if he were prepared to face the constitutional consequences; and that, in this case, if such advice were tendered, he should unquestionably refuse it, which would leave the Premier with the constitutional alternative of resignation or acquiescence in the refusal."

Sir G. GREY.—I say, looking at the position of the country at the time, and looking at the position I was in, I am certain that I was right in saying that Mr. Hall was the Governor's choice. It is not necessary for me to say more upon that point. The Governor has used harsh words regarding myself; I have not used any harsh words regarding him. He has said that I have told only half the truth. I ask honorable members to judge from this statement whether what I said to the House was not the whole truth. If the circumstances I alluded to were added, I am certain that there would be a unanimous verdict throughout the country, even among persons hostile to myself, that I had told the whole truth in the matter, and that I had made a fair and proper statement to the House. I now merely want to remove another error. I am sure the honorable member for Aron will do me justice in this respect. He said the other night that I was bound by oath to secrecy regarding the advice I gave the Governor. I think you will admit that he said that. It was said in the House by the honorable gentleman the other day. Now, Sir, no oath whatever was imposed on me, nor do I admit that it is unconstitutional that the Ministry should state what takes place between it and the Crown without the Crown's permission. That has been done over and over again; and, if we knew our own rights and privileges, if we knew the necessities under which our Ministers will be placed, we should insist upon it here—that the Ministry should be entitled to state to the House all things necessary for the House to know with regard to what passes between the Governor and his Ministers. In the United States all these things are required to pass in writing. That is a rule which I always insisted on when Governor. I, as Governor, insisted that it should be done; and I believe it was the proper rule to follow. I think, for the future, all these things ought to be put in writing, and that the Ministers should have a full and understood right to tell this House of Representatives everything which the public good requires should be known. That is the question. What does the public good, the good of the State at large, require to be made public? We ought not to allow any false delicacy to intervene. For the future I will insist, as far as I am concerned, on such a rule. I accept cheerfully the state-

Major Atkinson

ment made by the Governor. I throw up to him no hard words such as he used to me, though I believe I should be more justified in doing so than he was; but I will rest on that statement alone, whether it does not confirm every word I have said, and whether I did not tell the House the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, when I said that I did not advise the Governor to appoint Mr. Hall, that he was his own choice, and that he forced on the acceptance of Mr. Hall's resignation as a member of the Legislative Council.

Mr. ANDREWS.—Sir, before you put the motion, I beg to say that I object most seriously to a garbled statement being received by this House. There are statements in that paper which will convey certain impressions abroad. I should like to see it printed; but, before it is printed, I should like to see the source from which the information was obtained—to be attached to it. If it is taken from *Hansard*, let *Hansard* be quoted. If the information was derived from a member of this House, let it appear on the face of it from what source the information comes. If the authority is not given, it would be most unfair for this House to receive it. I shall oppose the receiving of it in its present state.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I trust that the proposal now made to lay the paper on the table will not be carried. I regret very much that the Premier has taken the step he has done. In my opinion it is calculated to bring the Governor into collision with the House, and is very much to be deprecated. The effect of this would be that Ministers—whatever side they may be on—would shelter themselves under any accusation by a communication from His Excellency being laid on the table. I regret this should have occurred, and, if no other honorable member asks for a division, I shall call for one, and shall consider that I am simply doing my duty. The House has it now in its own hands, if quite satisfied on the point, to introduce a clause in the Act that no person shall be eligible for a seat in this House unless he has been removed from the Legislative Council for some time. But to endeavour to import such a serious matter as this into the debate is a very fatal mistake, and I shall call for a division on the question, if no other honorable member thinks proper to do so.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—I quite agree with the last speaker. I also agree with the statement that the Ministry are responsible for the acts of His Excellency. Therefore I intend to propose the following amendment, if I am in order: That the Hon. the Premier, in communicating a written opinion of His Excellency the Governor reflecting on a member of this House, with the intention of influencing opinion in Parliament, has been guilty of a gross breach of the privileges of this House.

Mr. MOSS.—I was going to suggest that this might be a very favourable opportunity to bring on Motion No. 21. When the honorable member for Mount Ida moved his amendment, I was on the point of suggesting that this might be a favourable opportunity for taking the whole ques-

tion into consideration. We have to reply in some way. It is a paper laid on the table.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Does the honorable member speak to the amendment?

Mr. MOSS.—No, Sir. That amendment having been brought forward now, of course the idea which passed through my mind is not applicable. We cannot bring on Motion No. 21, which the honorable member for Port Chalmers wishes to move. I should like to ask whether I shall have an opportunity, at some later period of the debate, of speaking to the amendment, if I desire to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Parnell will be in order in speaking to the amendment later on, if he wishes to do so.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, I can only imagine that the honorable member for Mount Ida was not in the House when I first read this statement. I am sure an honorable gentleman of his clearness of perception would not have moved the amendment he has moved, if he had been aware of the circumstances under which I made that communication to the House.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—I was told that the honorable member asked the House whether it should be communicated or not; but I take it that it was the Premier's duty to lead the House.

Mr. HALL.—I told the House that a communication had been made to me. I said a memorandum had been addressed by the Governor to myself, not at all to the House, and I asked the House whether it desired that memorandum to be read. That question was put from the chair, and was carried without any dissentient voice; and therefore it is perfectly obvious that the reading of that memorandum was by the unanimous desire of the House itself.

Hon. MEMBERS.—“No, no.” “Yes, yes.”

Mr. HALL.—If it was not the unanimous desire of the House that it should be read, why did no honorable member object? I stated as clearly as I could the purport of this memorandum, and the House desired that it might be read. The honorable member for Mount Ida now moves that doing what the House ordered me to do is a breach of privilege. I ask members of the legal profession, whatever their party feelings may be—I ask all honorable members—not to commit themselves to such an obvious absurdity as to declare that to be a breach of privilege, for the House itself ordered me to do that which I did. The honorable member for Mount Ida was not then present. If any honorable member present thought it was an unconstitutional proceeding, he had nothing to do but to raise his voice against it. It is not a communication from the Governor to the House, but to myself. Now, what may undoubtedly be a breach of privilege is, that the Crown should interfere in the debates of this House. But this is an entirely different proceeding. It is an explanation in reference to something that took place in the House, with regard to which I informed His Excellency, and about the accuracy of which I do not find that there is any dispute whatever. The memorandum is one not addressed to the House, but to myself,

but laid on the table by the orders of the House itself. Now, how any honorable gentleman—

Sir G. GREY.—I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. I did not hear what the honorable member said as to "accuracy."

Mr. HALL.—I have not heard any dispute of the accuracy of the quotation of the honorable gentleman's speech. I read it very carefully and very slowly, and I did not gather from the honorable gentleman at the time, or when he spoke, that he in any way disputed the accuracy of the report. That is all that it is necessary for me to say on the present occasion. I ask honorable members to approach the subject with this consideration: that what has been done is by order of the House itself. We shall make ourselves ridiculous if we declare that to be a breach of privilege which we ourselves have ordered to be done.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Sir, I think that this has been a very unfortunate circumstance altogether. The honorable gentleman came down here and stated that he had a memorandum from His Excellency respecting a matter which took place in this House, and which His Excellency wished him to read, or to use in any manner he thought right. Now, when the House sanctioned the reading of the memorandum, there was not a member of this House who thought there would be anything in that message casting reflections on any member of this House, and I believed that my honorable friend the Premier would be very careful not to read any memorandum from His Excellency which cast any reflections, because it is a gross breach of privilege for any Governor to cast reflections on a member for anything said in this House. There is just this about it: that the House, not knowing what was in that message, concurred in that message being read, and the House has got into the position that we have given our sanction to this communication being made. Whatever may be our opinion respecting the matter of that communication—and I must say that I object to some of the expressions contained in that memorandum—I think the better way to get out of this very unfortunate difficulty into which we have fallen will be to ask the honorable member for Mount Ida to withdraw his amendment—I think that will be the best way to get out of it; and we shall learn from this circumstance to receive with very great caution indeed any communication for the future. I put it to the honorable member—who, I believe, is anxious to maintain the privileges of this House—whether he will not think, after consideration, that he was not sufficiently careful in reading a memorandum casting reflections on a member of this House. I therefore ask the honorable member for Mount Ida, as I consider it the best way of getting out of the difficulty into which we have unwittingly and unfortunately fallen, to allow the amendment to be withdrawn; but I do not wish the motion, "That the paper be laid on the table," to be carried.

Mr. STEWART.—I regard the reading of this message as very important from two points of view. One is, that the message satisfactorily con-

firms the statement which the honorable member (Sir G. Grey) made in this House the other evening—namely, that he was opposed to the Upper House being made a sort of rope-dancing saloon, to which members could go up and come down as it suited their convenience. That, I take it, is practically what was stated by Sir George Grey. The communication is important from another point of view, and that is this: that His Excellency seems to be unnecessarily anxious as to the fate of the business now before the House. I say unnecessarily anxious, because there is no occasion whatever for a communication of this sort being addressed by His Excellency to the Premier of the colony. Had His Excellency intended to communicate to this House in such a way as to place the House in a fair position to reply to him, I apprehend his course was to send down a message, so that the House could reply to it in a constitutional manner. Instead of this, what do we find? We find a communication which is intended to be private or not private at the will of the Premier—a communication which is placed in the hands of the Premier to be used by him at his own discretion. I apprehend that, if His Excellency intended that communication to be handed to this House, he ought to have sent it down by message, and he might have expected some reply. Instead of that, this course has been adopted: His Excellency prepares a carefully-written document; he hands it to his Premier, and he says, "I now make you guardian of my conscience—guardian of my duty as Governor of this colony." The Premier then comes down to this House and says, "I will not take any responsibility; I throw the responsibility on the House. I ask the House to say whether it will allow me to read this communication"—without in the slightest degree indicating the nature of its contents. Of course I wish to speak of His Excellency with the greatest respect; but I submit that he has unwittingly thrown himself into a false position, and that the Premier of the colony has endeavoured to shirk the responsibility which constitutionally devolves upon him, and to throw it on this House. Now, I submit that the Premier's clear duty was to have come down boldly and stated, "I have a communication relating to so-and-so. I do not wish to read the contents; I do not wish to state fully what His Excellency's views are; but I wish, in the first place, to indicate what the communication is, and to ask the leave of the House as to whether I shall read it or not." But what did the Premier do? He said, "I have a communication from His Excellency the Governor. It is a document which I am at liberty to read or not, just very much as circumstances may arise. But I am so afraid of reading it, in case I may get into a difficulty, that I throw myself upon the mercy of the House." Sir, is that a position which the Premier of this colony should occupy? I say, it is degrading to constitutional government that a Premier should come and throw himself upon the mercy—the absolute mercy—of this House as to what he should do and what he should not do. Then, not satisfied with that, he reads the document to the House; but he is afraid to say any

further. He says, "This document having been read, what am I to do with it next? I will not move that it be placed on the table of the House. I want some obscure member of the Opposition to do that." If a course of this kind is to be followed, there will be no proper responsible government in the colony, and His Excellency will be placed in an entirely false position with regard to the House. The clear duty of his Ministry is to take the responsibility and the whole responsibility, and not to divide it between the Governor on the one hand and the House on the other. Their duty is perfectly clear. They have shirked that duty, and the blame must rest entirely upon themselves. Although I have spoken somewhat earnestly on the matter, I confess I do not feel very strongly.—(Laughter).—What I mean to say is that, while I believe beyond a doubt that the Ministry have placed themselves in a false position, yet, as far as His Excellency's communication is concerned, I have no strong feeling one way or the other. I feel very much the same as the honorable member for Akaroa—that the House has drifted unwittingly into a somewhat false position. I sympathize very much with His Excellency; and I grieve to see that his Advisers have allowed the matter to drift into the position it has assumed. I see that the honorable member for Avon is ready to get up to attack me; but all I say is this: that the quietest way would be the best way out of the difficulty, and that this will afford a lesson to members not to be so trustful in future, but to tell the Premier that whatever communication he wishes to bring to the House he must convey on his own responsibility, and must stand the consequences. In the next place, if His Excellency wishes to communicate with this House, and not with the Premier, and if he expects a reply to his message, he must send it down in a proper and constitutional manner. I apprehend that the course was perfectly clear, and that, instead of taking the clear, simple, and easy course, the Ministry have resorted to a circuitous method, with a view of shirking their duty, and throwing upon the House the responsibility which should properly devolve upon themselves.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—The honorable gentleman need not be afraid that I am going to attack him. I rise to say what I think is the position at the present time. A statement has been made to this House that the Legislative Council has been used for party convenience—that the Governor of this colony has lent himself, for party purposes, to a course of action which ought not to have been adopted. Now, it is a constitutional maxim which is admitted on all hands that there is no act of the Crown for which some Ministers of the Crown in Parliament cannot be found to be responsible. I ask, who is responsible for this act which is complained of? The honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) got up in the House and distinctly gave it to understand that he was not responsible for putting my honorable friend the Premier into the position of serving the people in the office which he now holds. That is what he gave the House distinctly to understand. If he is not responsible,

who is responsible? Clearly the Ministry that sits on these benches would have been responsible, if he is not—that is, if he had followed the proper constitutional course. If his advice was refused, he was bound to resign, and a Ministry must have been formed by the Governor that would defend his action on this very point on these benches. Did the honorable member do that? Not a bit of it. He took what was an indication of the Governor's mind, and went away. He left His Excellency—according to the statement which has been read—with the understanding that he would communicate further with him after consulting his colleagues. Well, he went and consulted his colleagues; and his colleague, the honorable member for Totara, sent up a memorandum, which distinctly takes the responsibility; he conveyed the decision of the Governor to my honorable friend the Premier, that his resignation would be accepted; and from that moment the Ministry were distinctly responsible for that act. There was never a greater constitutional principle before this House than there is at the present time—whether there are to be acts of the Crown for which nobody is to be found responsible here. I am not going to sit on these benches, and I am sure my colleagues are not, unless we are prepared to defend the action of His Excellency as long as we hold this position. That, Sir, is our purpose; and I appeal to this House not to let party strife come in upon this question. I ask honorable members to consider their position as Englishmen—as gentlemen—and to rise above what has taken place for the last two years, when Ministers have sat on these benches and have traduced the Crown—have led this House to treat the Crown with contempt—have sat here and been willing to put up members of this House to abuse an absent gentleman, and not only an absent gentleman, but the representative of the Crown. Our Constitution, Sir, is imminently in danger if men in the position of the late Premier are to take the course he has taken. I felt very strongly before—what is now recognized all over the British colonies, and by everybody who has any knowledge of constitutional government—that the honorable member dragged the Colony of New Zealand through the dirt on that privilege question of the late Governor, Lord Normanby. Such a thing was never heard of among reasonable men. I do not hesitate to say that the House was entirely led away by party spirit at that time; and I do hope that on the present occasion they will look upon this as a great question of principle—that we are not to have it asserted on the floor of this House that there is any act of the Crown for which nobody is responsible; and that there will never be a Governor tolerated in this colony who will act irresponsibly and without the advice of Ministers. The advice of Ministers is as distinct as possible in this case. The late Ministry were responsible for this act; and they come down here, and venture to do what I think will be stigmatized as one of the meanest tricks in the whole world. They gave the House to understand that the Governor has done an act for which they were not responsible. I ask the House to consider

that point, and not to be led away from it. We have got a great principle to decide—namely, whether the Crown is to take action for which the Ministry of the day are not responsible. Resignation is the clear course for any Ministry who disapprove of the action of the Governor. If the Governor were to act as my honorable friend used to do when he was Governor, and set aside the will of the people, sooner or later he would be brought to book by the resignation of Ministers and their declining to serve under any one who would act without advice. That is the constitutional position, as I take it. I hope we shall stick to it, and not be led away by any party feeling.

Mr. GISBORNE.—I fully admit the constitutional doctrine that, in the case of a Ministry advising the Governor to perform an act, if the Governor did not choose to adopt their advice, or if he acted without their advice, and the Ministry continued in office, that Ministry is constitutionally responsible for the action taken by the Governor. My honorable friend the member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) never denied that the late Government were constitutionally responsible for the act of the Governor in not accepting the resignation of the Hon. Mr. Hall. We did not resign, and therefore we are responsible. But that is not the question before the House. The question before the House is, whether it is constitutional for the Crown to take part in the debates in this House. By admitting this document, and laying it on the table, we set the precedent that it is allowable for the Governor to take reports—I do not know what reports they were—of what members state in the House, to give his opinion upon them, to comment upon them in a severe manner, and to reflect upon honorable members on account of their speeches in this House. There are statements in the memorandum for which, if His Excellency were a member of this House, he might possibly be called to order. He says that a member stated what was only part of the truth, or, in fact, an untruth. Well, I say that is unconstitutional. The Constitution is in danger, if we allow this practice to be adopted, that while we are speaking in this House messages are to be sent through the Premier commenting and reflecting upon statements made by members in this House upon a question which, as in this case, is still pending, and, as in this case, commenting upon reports which are, so far as we know, anonymous. The Premier could have easily followed this course: He could, with the consent of the Governor, have got the records of the office, showing the minutes regarding the acceptance of his resignation, and he could have placed them on the table by command of His Excellency. There could have been no objection to that course. But what does he do? In a Ministerial statement he comes and states that His Excellency has intrusted to him a memorandum conveying His Excellency's opinions with regard to the facts of a case referred to in debate by the honorable member for the Thames. We did not know what that memorandum was. We allowed it to be read. We find that the memorandum casts severe reflections upon a speech made by an honorable mem-

Mr. Rolleston

ber of this House, and is founded upon a report the nature of which is not stated. I say that to admit that as a precedent would be a serious breach of our constitutional principles. We have freedom of speech in this House, and the Crown has no right to comment upon the speeches made by members of this House. I do not know whether the honorable member for Mount Ida is going to withdraw his amendment. If he does, I think the honorable member for the Thames should also withdraw his motion that the paper be laid on the table: if the honorable member presses his motion to a division, I shall certainly vote against it, as I think it would be a very dangerous precedent to lay this paper on the table.

Mr. HISLOP.—I should not like the remarks of the Premier as to the responsibility for his act to pass by unnoticed. Honorable members will recollect that, after he made his preliminary statement to the House, I asked whether the paper he was about to read was a message from the Crown, and I pointed out that the course he proposed to take would form a very inconvenient precedent. The honorable gentleman turned round and told me that I could not have heard what he said, otherwise I should not have made that remark. I was completely misled. I understood that, the Premier's attention having been called to the inconvenience of what he was about to do, everything would have been thoroughly in order. If I had anticipated that he was going to read not only a statement of facts, but also comments from the Governor, comments which clearly are not admissible, I should certainly have given my voice with the Noes. With regard to the remark of the Minister of Justice in reference to the honorable member for the Thames, he must remember that the Premier is jointly responsible with the honorable member for the Thames for the remark that he gave no advice to His Excellency, because it was in answer to a question put by the Premier that the honorable member for the Thames said he had tendered no advice. I hope the matter will now be allowed to drop. I believe the Opposition were not sufficiently attentive to their duties in allowing the Premier to read the memorandum. I hope the motion and amendment will be withdrawn.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I must say that I agree with those honorable gentlemen who express regret that this matter should have cropped up at all. It seems to me that the House has got into an unfortunate position, and I believe honorable gentlemen on both sides of the House who are of a reasonable frame of mind will regret that anything of the sort should have occurred. I would point out that the whole of this unpleasant and embarrassing matter has arisen entirely from the habit of the honorable member for the Thames of introducing the Governor's name into discussion in this House. When I heard the honorable gentleman make his remarks the other night, I expected that some unpleasantness would arise, because I felt that he was introducing an element into our debates which could not be conveniently or constitutionally introduced into them. He

mentioned matters of which this House had no cognizance, and which no member of this House could answer, and the only way in which the honorable gentleman could be answered was by some such course as that adopted by the Premier. The only person who could answer the honorable member for the Thames was a person who was not in this House, and the only person through whom he could answer was the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, or one of the other Ministers. Now, it is quite clear that, if the Governor's name is to be introduced into our debates, and if the confidential communications of the Governor are to be mentioned in this House, then the only possible course to be adopted is, that memoranda or communications of this kind should be made to the House in an indirect way by the Governor; and nothing more damaging than that could be conceived, because the Governor, however unwilling he might be, could at once be made a party combatant. It is laid down by parliamentary authorities that both sides should be most cautious not to place the Governor in the position of a party combatant; but, if one party does it, it is next to inevitable that the other party will adopt some means to combat the allegations they make. I was very sorry to hear the honorable member for the Thames make the statements to which I have referred, but I think he was led away in the course of his remarks, or perhaps by the heat of debate, into making direct references to His Excellency the Governor. I do not blame the honorable gentleman, but I am exceedingly sorry that he did so. If the same line of conduct is adopted in future by that honorable gentleman, or by any other honorable member, we shall continually have questions raised as to invasions of the privileges of this House. Honorable gentlemen will remember that in 1877, when something of the same kind took place, I took a very strong view of the matter, in which I differed very much from some of my friends for whose opinions I have the greatest possible respect. I went with those honorable gentlemen who took the view that the House ought to resent in the most determined manner any interference with its debates. I voted on that occasion for censuring the Governor for being a party to what was a breach of the privileges of this House. I believe I was technically wrong; but, at the same time, I had no hesitation in voting for the assertion of our privileges; and on this occasion I feel almost the same resentment that anything like interference from an outside power should take place. I must say that I was much struck to-night by the statement of the late Premier that in his opinion it was quite a mistaken principle that the advice tendered by the Ministers of the Crown should not be communicated to this House without the consent of the Crown. He told us that every Minister ought to be perfectly free to say anything he liked as to the advice which had been tendered.

Sir G. GREY.—What I said was, that I thought memoranda should be written, and that I thought they should be communicated to the House.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The honorable gentleman stated that in his opinion memoranda should be written, in order that they might be communicated to this House; but he said that he did not at all agree that Ministers should not communicate to the House the advice tendered to the Crown without the consent of the Governor—that they ought to be allowed to do it on their own responsibility. Well, Sir, last session I asked the honorable gentleman whether he had tendered advice to His Excellency on the subject of the dissolution; and, if so, whether he would have any objection to lay that advice before the House. I asked the question with some diffidence, as I did not feel at all sure what view the honorable gentleman would take of this question. He instantly replied that, whatever advice he had communicated, he could not make it known to the House except with the consent of the Governor; and he gave me a very severe snubbing for having ventured to suggest that it should be communicated to the House before it had been ordered by the Governor to be communicated. Now, it is strange that in six weeks he should have altered his mind, and given an opinion in an exactly opposite direction. I feel quite satisfied that when the honorable gentleman reflects upon the matter he will see that the view he took last session was the correct one, and that it is entirely wrong for Ministers, or ex-Ministers, to give information which is not communicated to this House by express order of the Governor. I had not intended to speak upon this very delicate matter, in regard to which I hope every honorable gentleman will display the greatest moderation. I hope both motions will be withdrawn.

Sir G. GREY.—The honorable member for Geraldine accuses me of inconsistency. I think the House will see, upon a review of the facts of the case, that I am perfectly consistent. I said last session that the rule as at present established was, that a Minister ought not, except under extraordinary circumstances, to communicate to the House the advice given to the Crown. I said the same thing the other night. The difficulty arose through the Premier having put a direct question to me. He said, "Did you not advise the Governor to accept my resignation?" to which I at once said, "If I had given that advice, I should not say I had done so; but, as I did not give advice upon the matter, I have no hesitation in saying that I did not do so." What I said to-night was, that I believed that rule should be altered, and that all communications between the Governor and his Ministers upon important points should pass in writing. I tried to enforce that rule when I was Governor of the colony. It is a rule adopted by Her Majesty, and I said I thought the same rule should be adopted here. I think the rule adopted in the United States is a good one, and that is, that every memorandum that passes between the President and members of the Government is laid before the representatives of the people. I think there can be no objection to that, and I should like to see it adopted here. That is what I said, and I think the honorable gentleman will see that

there is no inconsistency between the two opinions. There are one or two other points upon which I should like to make a few remarks. I think, when such personal language is used in regard to myself, the Premier should have shown me the memorandum before reading it to the House. All the rules of courtesy required that he should take that course, and that is certainly what I should have done. I should then have been able to tell my friends what the question was,—whether the memorandum should be read in the House or not. It seems to me that the honorable gentleman's object was to get the House to consent to the reading of the memorandum; and I say that no honorable man, situated as I was, could have done anything else than have asked that it should be read, the Premier having risen and spoken in the manner he did. It was a foregone conclusion that it must be read. I think it was also a foregone conclusion that, in some manner or another, it should be made public. I think I have a right to say that, and that it was a foregone conclusion that an impression should be made on the public mind that some very grave charges had been brought against me. I believe that memorandum is aimed at me personally. I believe, from the manner in which the Premier read the memorandum out in the House, that it was aimed at me personally. That is the impression in my mind. But I am perfectly convinced that any one reading that memorandum will be convinced of two things: first, that the Governor has shown a hostile feeling towards myself; for there is one very remarkable expression used. I appeal to all honorable gentlemen, and I appeal to all the people of the country, have I not—long before there was an idea that the Hon. Mr. Hall was coming down here from the other House—expressed my opinions very strongly upon that subject? Have I not, over and over again, stated that this shifting from the Upper to the Lower Chamber was an improper thing? Thousands of people have heard me express that opinion, and have agreed with me in that sentiment. When I expressed that opinion to the Governor, he said it would be a very hard thing to give such advice against a political opponent of my own. I am sure I felt that that was a very hard expression for him to use, and I think it will show anybody that I, as a Minister advising the Crown, must have felt that an effort was being made to put me out of office in that way. That was the impression in my mind, and I do not think that memorandum can produce any other impression on any impartial mind. Then, again, I feel convinced that that memorandum will show that I stated what was perfectly true when I said that I did not advise the Governor to accept of Mr. Hall's resignation of his seat in the Legislative Council in order to put him here. I maintain still, as I said just now, that I could only advise the Governor according to the best of my ability, and in accordance with the feelings I had expressed from one end of the country to the other, and which everybody knew. I am therefore, I think, entitled to expect that an assurance shall be given that this memorandum shall be published.

Sir G. Grey

An Hon. MEMBER.—It will be published in *Hansard*.

Sir G. GREY.—It should be quicker than that. *Hansard* will not be out for some time; but I think this memorandum should be published in the public Press to-morrow morning. That will be perfectly satisfactory to me, and it is only what is due to the people of New Zealand, because this is a very serious question. Then, I further reply to another point. The honorable member for Avon referred to my action in regard to a previous case of privilege. I forget exactly the expression he used; but I reply to him that I am perfectly satisfied that I acted rightly in that case. There is no doubt in my mind on the subject. I have weighed the matter over and over again, in a perfectly unimpassioned manner; I have had more experience of public affairs than any other member present, and I am perfectly certain that I would not have taken the course which the Premier has taken to-night. I would not have communicated that memorandum to the House until I had first given the person to whom reference was made fair warning of what was to be done. Supposing I were a criminal placed here on trial for a crime—the crime of untruth, for instance—I ask any honorable member, and especially honorable members of the legal profession, would it be considered honorable and just that a mine should be sprung upon me as that mine has been sprung upon me? Ought I not to have had an opportunity of seeing the charge that was to be brought against me? Ought I not to have had an opportunity of seeing what was written, so that I might have had time to weigh every expression that the Governor used, and to make up my mind as to the exact manner in which I should reply? I believe nothing more unjust was ever done than that which the Premier has done to-night. The honorable gentleman cannot deny that he was springing a mine upon me. I can prove that. In speaking this afternoon, he came to this question of whether I had advised the Governor on this subject, and he said, "I will pass that over for the present, because I will bring it out at a future time." Therefore I am satisfied it was his intention to wait until half-past seven o'clock, when the House would be full, and then suddenly to surprise me with a charge which I never expected would be brought against me. But I say now, if he aims a charge against me of stating an untruth, my best answer is the memorandum itself. I am perfectly contented with that. I leave the House to deal with the two motions before it, as it likes best. I think this memorandum ought to be published to-morrow morning in the papers throughout the colony. In fact, it should be telegraphed to-night. I do not want my reply to be telegraphed at the same time, because I am satisfied the memorandum answers itself. I am satisfied, too, that there will be but one feeling in the minds of the people of the colony, and that is, that the Premier has treated me most unfairly in this matter; that he has not treated me according to the rules of honor, or in accordance with the habits of gentlemen; and that he has not acted according

to the customs of all deliberative Assemblies, by communicating to me a document he was about to produce against me.

Major ATKINSON.—I confess it is very difficult to my mind to understand the position the honorable member for the Thames takes up. He first of all tells us this is the most unjust thing he ever heard of, and he then asks the House to have this document immediately telegraphed all over the colony because it refutes itself. I am rather puzzled to know what he complains of, if the document refutes itself. I should like to say a few words, first of all, with regard to Legislative Councillors resigning their seats in that body with a view to contesting seats in this House. To my mind, that is a perfectly reasonable and right proceeding. I have yet to learn that because a gentleman accepts a seat in the Legislative Council the people of New Zealand are to be debarred for ever from his services in this House. Nor can I understand how an honorable gentleman who professes the utmost Liberalism, and who says the people are to be unfettered in their choice of representatives, can desire that some of our best men, because they choose, from ill-health or other cause, and with the approval of Her Majesty, to serve in the Legislative Council, are to be debarred for ever after from sitting in this House. I cannot understand how a true Liberal can support such a doctrine as that, and I hope that doctrine will never be allowed to have weight in this House. I hope we shall always leave the people absolutely free and unfettered to choose any eminent Legislative Councillor to represent them in this House if they think proper. I should also like to point out another matter that appears to have escaped the honorable member's memory. If any question of treachery or want of courtesy is to be raised in regard to this matter—if there has been any breach of good faith from one end of it to the other—it has been on the part of the honorable member for the Thames, and not on the part of my honorable friend the Premier. I confess, standing here as a Minister of the Crown, that when I read this statement of the honorable member in *Hansard* I take blame to myself that I did not call your attention to it, Sir, and ask that he should be stopped. I have compared the statement in the memorandum with that in *Hansard*, and I find them almost word for word the same, and I say again that, standing here as a Minister of the Crown, I take blame to myself that I did not ask that the honorable gentleman should be stopped when he made that statement. However, I acknowledge I did not thoroughly hear it or catch its full bearing until I read it to-night. I submit, the statement here is entirely at variance with the facts of the case as submitted to the House. I say the only impression that can be drawn from these words of the honorable member is entirely opposed to the facts contained in that memorandum, and admitted by the honorable gentleman himself. I will read his own words, and then let honorable members judge of what he conveyed to the House. Honorable members will find his statement in *Hansard*, page 283, in the first column; and this is what he says: "A resigna-

tion is not complete until the Governor approves of it; and I say, the Governor having accepted his resignation without advice, the putting him back into this House for the purpose of leading a party was a personal act." Well, if that means anything it means that my honorable friend's resignation was accepted without advice. That is what it means, and that is what he conveyed to the House and the country. The honorable member for Totara now tells us that Ministers are fully responsible. Therefore we have there a direct conflict between the statement of the honorable member for the Thames and the facts of the case.

Mr. GISBORNE.—Might I be allowed to explain? I say, if the Governor chose to act against the advice of Ministers, or without their advice, and they still remained in office, they were constitutionally responsible for his action.

Major ATKINSON.—That, of course, the honorable member for the Thames also denies; but all reasonable men would understand what those words mean. At any rate, Ministers acquiesced—that is to say, there is no written record that they dissented from my honorable friend's resignation. As we know from the statement of the Governor, as conveyed to the House by the Premier, and from the statement of the late Premier, the late Premier and His Excellency had a conversation on the matter, and the late Premier undertook to consult his colleagues and inform His Excellency of their opinion. Then, when the papers came back, they simply informed His Excellency that the way in which the resignation should be accepted—

Sir G. GREY.—I ask that the memorandum be read. I did not say that I would consult my colleagues.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, Sir, I know it is very necessary to be accurate about words, for they are very often used to conceal our thoughts. I must apologize to the late Premier for having misrepresented him to a certain extent. These are the exact words of the memorandum: "The Premier left, saying he would consult such of his colleagues as were in Wellington, and let the Governor hear further on the subject." Of course, never having been a Governor, I cannot say how the Governor would understand those words; but, having been a Minister and Responsible Adviser to a Governor, I should say, if I were in the position of the late Premier, he would naturally expect my opinion as to what should be done, and, if I had expressed an opinion as to what should be done, I would give him my advice according to that opinion. I say, if such a relation is to exist between Ministers and the Governor—if the Premier is to come down and say that is not giving advice—it seems to me it is quite time we reviewed the positions of Ministers between this House and the Crown. Just let us read a few lines further, and we see a firm impression is given, as I stated, that the honorable gentleman and his colleagues did not tender any advice in the matter, and that it was simply the personal act of the Governor: "If I had advised it, I should not have disclosed that advice. I did not advise it."

Sir G. GREY.—There is an omission there. That is only part of the conversation.

Major ATKINSON.—I am reading from the honorable gentleman's own speech.

Sir G. GREY.—Yes; but it was elicited from me by a question. There was an interpolation by the Premier.

Major ATKINSON.—I misunderstood the honorable gentleman. I will read the whole passage:—

"A resignation is not complete until the Governor approves of it; and I say, the Governor having accepted his resignation without advice, the putting him back into this House for the purpose of leading a party was a personal act.

"Mr. HALL.—I would ask the honorable gentleman if he did not advise the acceptance of my resignation.

"Sir G. GREY.—If I had advised it, I should not have disclosed that advice. I did not advise it. I say, therefore, that he sits here the personal representative of the Governor in this House. Sir, that is the case. Unless that had been done, he could not have been here."

I will ask any honorable gentleman whether there can be any question whatever that the idea conveyed to this House was, that it was the act of the Governor alone, done in spite of his Ministers; and I was astonished when I heard that not only had Ministers informed His Excellency how the thing could be done, but that the Premier had left the Governor with the understanding, on the part of the Governor, that further advice would be given, and that the honorable member for Totara, acting for the Colonial Secretary—

Sir G. GREY.—The honorable member is mistaken. There is nothing to show that I promised the Governor to return and give further advice.

Major ATKINSON.—No doubt the honorable gentleman is sore about the whole matter. I shall not be interrupted further by the honorable gentleman. But here is stated what occurred: "The Premier left, saying he would consult with such of his colleagues as were in Wellington, and let the Governor hear further on the subject." If that does not mean further advice, I do not know what does. There is no doubt that, with an ordinary person, desiring not to conceal his thoughts, the impression conveyed by that sentence was that His Excellency was to receive further advice. The whole thing is perfectly clear—namely, that it is in accordance with the facts of the case as we have them before us now. I think that it is a great pity that we have got into this way of bringing His Excellency's name before the House. I think we should endeavour to give up the habit as far as possible. The practice was never introduced into this House until the honorable member for the Thames came here and did it. We never dreamed of such a thing until then; and since then we have, unfortunately, been continually dragging it into the debates in one way and another, either through the action of the late Ministry, or through the Chair not hearing the allusions. I think it is a mistake. We should hold the Ministers who sit on

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this bench responsible for whatever His Excellency may do. I may say that, so long as we sit here, we shall hold ourselves absolutely responsible, and this I know—I need hardly tell our side of the House so: that, if His Excellency should feel it his duty, in the interests of the public service—because I cannot conceive that the Governor would so far forget his duty as to act in the interests of a party—I say, if ever the Governor should feel it his duty to differ from us in such a matter as this or any other matter, we should take the constitutional course, and immediately place our resignations in His Excellency's hands; but so long as we retain the confidence of His Excellency and of the House we shall claim to be absolutely responsible for every act of His Excellency. We ask the House to hold us responsible for everything done. I hope, Sir, you will see your way to prohibit any reference to His Excellency's name. I will in future keep a sharper look-out over myself; and I trust that this clear declaration on the part of Ministers will result in the House visiting any sins of the Governor on the right shoulders, which at present are our shoulders.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I venture to suggest that this discussion should now be allowed to come to a close, because we can get no further good out of it; but I hope the Ministry will allow a copy of this document to be sent to the papers for to-morrow morning. With that assurance we may allow the matter to drop.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—My only objection was that such a document should come to the House as an official document without a decided expression of opinion on the part of the House as to the action of Ministers in permitting it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member cannot make a second speech.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—I merely wish to explain myself.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Does the honorable member wish to withdraw his motion?

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Even then I doubt if the honorable member can make a speech.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—Just a word or two by way of personal explanation. I was out of the House when this question arose, and came in when the honorable member for Totara was speaking. Believing that "vigilance is the price of liberty," I at once drafted my amendment, without committing any member of my party; but, as I understand this will not be an official document, I beg leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir G. GREY.—I beg to withdraw my motion for the printing of the document, understanding the document will be published in the papers.

Motion withdrawn.

TRIENNIAL PARLIAMENTS BILL.

On the Order of the day for the resumption of the debate on this question being called on,

Mr. MACANDREW said,—I move the previous question.

Mr. HALL.—I suppose we are to understand, from the motion of the leader of the Opposition,

that honorable gentlemen opposite really wish to stop these measures of electoral reform.

MEMBERS ON OPPOSITION BENCHES.—No.

Mr. HALL.—Here is a Bill, which has upon it the name of the late Premier—a Bill for shortening the duration of Parliaments—to cause Parliament to be elected every three years instead of every five years; and that is the Bill we propose, with this alteration: that it shall come into operation at once, instead of at the end of the present Parliament, as was proposed by the late Government. It has been said that the late Government intended to make it come into operation at once, and we accept that intimation. The alterations we propose are shown by italics in the reprint of the Bill. Now, the question is, whether there is sufficient reason for the House refusing to read a second time this Bill for shortening the duration of Parliaments. Are honorable members, for purely party purposes, going to refuse to pass a Bill which has been described as so great a boon—

MEMBERS ON OPPOSITION BENCHES.—No.

Mr. HALL.—The Bill may be passed in ten minutes; it may then go to the Upper House, and become law in a day or two. The fact is, honorable members, for purely party purposes, are going to deprive people of this measure. Let that fact go forth to the electors of New Zealand, that for purely party purposes, honorable gentlemen opposite are ready to throw away one of the liberal Bills asked for, and which they professed themselves so desirous of giving. I can hardly believe that a majority of the House will go into the lobby and support a proposition of that kind. I cannot believe that they will lend themselves to that which is so wrong in itself—to that which is so great, so enormous, a party blunder—as to stop a useful measure of this kind, simply in order to put a stumbling-block in the way of their opponents. I will state the alterations the Government propose to make in the Bill if it should be read a second time. We propose in the first place to strike out the words, “after the dissolution or other determination of.” It will then read, “The present and every future House of Representatives shall, unless the General Assembly be sooner dissolved, continue for a period of three years, to be computed from the day fixed for the return of the writs issued for choosing such House, and no longer.” The Bill will consist of three clauses. Honorable gentlemen on the opposite side will not gain anything by their intended action: as I stated before, it is the determination, not only of the Government, but of their supporters, that we shall have an opportunity of placing our measures on the Statute Book. They will not gain their object; they will only sacrifice the time of the House and the country. Therefore I hope they will not persist in their course, but will allow us to introduce and pass the measures which we have prepared and are ready to lay on the table of this House. As soon as that is done we may come to the other business, which honorable gentlemen are so very anxious to arrive at. The question now is, whether this Bill shall be read a second time; and I confidently ask the majority

of the House not to say “No” to the proposition.

Mr. READER WOOD.—My honorable friend is quite right in supposing that a majority of this House will not go into the lobby to vote against the passing of this Triennial Parliaments Bill. I do not think the honorable gentleman before in his life ever expressed more clearly or with greater force the determination of the members of this Assembly. They are determined, I believe, and the country is also determined, that for the future there shall be triennial Parliaments; and so, as the honorable gentleman himself says, we may let that fact go forth to the Colony of New Zealand. But, at the same time, we have in this House—or, at any rate, on this side of the House—a very great respect indeed for His Excellency the Governor and for constitutional forms; and when the Colonial Treasurer has come down to this House and told us that supply is urgently needed, we say it is not the part of patriotic men in this House to go on with any other business until supply is granted. Let that fact also go forth throughout the colony.

Major ATKINSON.—If it were a fact, it would be very grateful, not only to this House, but to the public at large. But it is not a fact, as the honorable gentleman is very well aware. Now, the whole difficulty has arisen through the clumsiness of honorable gentlemen opposite. Like some nations of old, they have been foolish enough, in a case of great emergency, through quarrels among themselves, to put the leadership in commission, and, as we have seen in history, defeat has followed. They are seeking to retrieve the position into which they have got—a position in which they must be disastrously defeated—a position out of which we do not intend to let them escape. They have no possible chance of escape, and we mean to inflict a signal defeat upon them. Now, suddenly those honorable gentlemen get very virtuous indeed, and we hear a cry about the poor man, just as we have heard it for some years past. We hear exactly what we have heard during the last two years, a great cry and very little wool. The honorable gentleman is always going to do a great deal. He was going to give the people a free breakfast-table. Now, I ask, what has he given them? I ask, what liberal measure has he given them? I hope the honorable member will point it out. Has he given the people a free breakfast-table? Certainly not. He has put a certain amount of money into the pockets of the large dealers and the merchants; but he has not carried out in any one respect the promises he has made: and now, as I have said, in order to retrieve the disgrace which has fallen upon them through their wretched management in parliamentary tactics, in which they claim to be such skilful generals, they are pretending that they are prepared to grant supplies. They are not prepared to grant supplies at all. They are prepared to use it as a stalking-horse to get over their bad generalship. They know we have got them into a position where they cannot attack us successfully. Therefore they become very virtuous, and say, “Only give us another chance, and we will fight you.” We will not give them that chance until it suits us. We cannot allow the

country to be played with any longer. Plainly we are in that position that we can have what we wish. At any rate, we on this side of the House have determined that the country shall not be played with any longer, and that the liberal measures shall be pushed forward. Honorable gentlemen opposite are now doing what has never yet been done in this country, and, as far as I know, what has never been done in any other country. They are refusing, for mere party purposes, to grant necessary supplies. For party purposes, and to retrieve their bad generalship, they are going to refuse supplies for carrying on the necessary services. The honorable gentlemen say, "We are not going to refuse supplies. Only bring on the motion, and we will grant it directly." That is true to the ear; but it is only half-true, like a great many other things that come from that side of the House. They know perfectly well that we could not get supplies even if we got into Committee of Supply at the present time, because they mean to move an amendment which would of necessity compel us to debate it in self-defence. They are not sincere, because they know, from the very position we occupy, that, in duty to ourselves, our party, and the country, we cannot permit them to move that resolution in that position. Therefore, if they choose, under this colourable pretext, to take the responsibility of refusing supplies, let the responsibility be upon them. At any rate, we are prepared to be judged by the country, and not by those honorable members. At the present time my table is groaning with applications from Road Boards, counties, and boroughs—it is not yet groaning with applications from contractors and other persons, but it will be before long—for the subsidies which we are ready to pay but for the obstruction of those honorable gentlemen. It will be for their constituents to decide; and, when payment has to be withheld, I think they will very soon see that their constituents are not very proud of the work they are doing. At any rate, we shall hold on, as I say, and of course it may be necessary to consult the constituencies upon the question. I am glad to see that both sides are agreed upon that point. Of course we on this side are quite clear as to what we are going to do if necessity arises, so that there is one point on which we shall be unanimous. We shall be able to put honorable gentlemen's courage to the test on that point very shortly. Now, I would like to point out to the House this fact: that ever since I have been in the House we have never yet permitted party considerations to interfere with ordinary supply. When I was in opposition I was always prepared to grant the Government reasonable supplies from week to week. When we had a large majority we could reduce the amount as we thought fit. We invariably gave it to keep the public service going. Although the honorable member for the Thames has on various occasions endeavoured to reduce supplies when I was in the Government, he never succeeded. The House has overborne him, and has in every case granted the necessary supply to carry on the government of the country. I hope honorable members will not break through that excellent rule, and let party spirit

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so far get the better of them as to permit innocent persons to suffer in order that the Opposition may retrieve their bad generalship. They may be sure that this action on their part will be readily comprehended by the country. The country above all things hates incompetent men; and when it finds that those honorable gentlemen have not only landed us in the enormous financial difficulties which now face us—

Mr. ANDREWS.—Show it.

Major ATKINSON.—I have shown it effectually. I am sorry the honorable gentleman, who is considered a moderate man, and who I thought took such interest in these matters that he was competent to judge facts when submitted to him, does not yet see the serious position the colony is in. I recommend the honorable gentleman to carefully read my Statement, and if he comes up to the Treasury I will confirm every figure by the original documents. If that does not convince him he will have to remain unconvinced. If the facts which I gave the other day are not enough to convince this House that those honorable gentlemen have brought the country into this state, and that they are thoroughly incompetent, I do not know what is. But I say the country has recognized the fact of their incompetency by ejecting them from those benches: and the country will still further recognize that fact when it sees that honorable gentlemen who boast of their great parliamentary tactics and skill, and who allege—what I do not admit—that they have a large majority, are unable to bring that majority to bear upon us on these benches. If that is not incompetency I would like to know what is. Therefore I say the country will judge honorable gentlemen upon their doings now. So much for that part of the subject. Now for a few words with regard to the Bill under consideration. I would like to warn honorable gentlemen, as I warned them before, that any delay in the passage of these Bills may, and very probably will, insure their defeat. I am only expressing my opinion after considerable Parliamentary experience. I understand that there are certain honorable gentlemen who do not like these Bills at all—who pretend great engerneers for them now, but who are taking this means of defeating them; and I know of no more effective means. We know that these Bills have to go to another House. We know that the time is passing away very rapidly, and that soon it will become impossible to keep a House any longer. If this party strife goes on much longer I venture to say that not one of these Bills will become law this year. Any honorable gentleman who has been long enough in this House will tell honorable members that these measures run very great risk indeed if this strife is prolonged. I fear that some honorable gentlemen will be led away by the specious argument that they are not voting against this Bill, but are only delaying it. I would just notice this one point: If you pass this motion, how can you get this Bill on again? Where will it appear to-morrow? If the previous question be carried, how can it get on the Order Paper again? Just look at the Order Paper.

Mr. MACANDREW.—We will do it.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course honorable gentlemen opposite are ready to promise anything. We will judge them by their acts. They have never performed a single promise they made in regard to these measures—not a single one. I warn honorable gentlemen who have these Bills at heart—I know that there are some honorable members on that side of the House who desire to see these measures carried—I warn them that they are now going into the lobby with men who for two years had charge of these Bills, and who are not to be trusted with the carrying of them through the House. Whatever may be the decision of the House, upon this point, at any rate, the Government have done their duty. They have taken the very earliest opportunity to show their sincerity. They have submitted a series of Bills as perfect as Bills of this description can be—in four or five days they have submitted a series of Bills to this House; whereas those honorable gentlemen, after four or five years' incubation, had not a single one fit to be produced to this House. The records will show that such is the case. Does the House believe in the sincerity of those honorable gentlemen? I do not know how honorable members who have these measures at heart, because they have unfortunately got mixed up with a party with which they have no real sympathy, can submit to a motion like this, which will undoubtedly very considerably endanger the passing of these measures, and, possibly, may cause them to be thrown out altogether.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—I have never heard my honorable friend speak so sweetly as he has just done. His speech was like the sad and plaintive notes of the dying swan. He objects to the passing of this motion, and he tells you that if you pass it these Bills cannot be lifted up again. I reply at once, and you, Sir, will correct me if I am wrong, that when we come into office we shall have control of the business on Government days, and we will bring these Bills up to their proper place at the proper time. The honorable gentleman made use of one extraordinary and most significant phrase. He said the Government would not leave office, in justice to themselves, to their party, and to the country. Note the order of these words: No. 1, themselves; No. 2, their party; and No. 3, in the background, the country. The honorable gentleman never spoke truer words. No. 1, themselves, a long way ahead; No. 2, the party, as close as you can keep it; and No. 3, the country, a long, long way behind. My honorable friend knows perfectly well that that is exactly true. He spoke earnestly, as he always does; he spoke his mind; he spoke the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He knows that the sole object is to keep himself and his friends on the Government benches. We are told by the Premier that this important measure can be passed in ten minutes. Let me call attention to the motion of my honorable friend the member for Port Chalmers. We will deal with that motion now, if you like, without any debate, within the ten minutes, after which these measures can be gone on with. Do they desire that? Certainly not. For the first time

in the history of parliamentary government we have a Ministry which does not possess the confidence of the House, and which dares not go to the vote. We have a Ministry only two of whom are Liberals at heart; the others are Liberals only so long as they remain on those benches. They will do anything to keep in their present position. But they will be measured by public opinion. If they stop there on the terms they lay down, so surely will they sacrifice any political reputation they may possess. I say the case is not parallel with that of 1877. In 1877 the honorable gentleman had, I believe, a majority. We gave him a chance of bringing on his no-confidence motion. We now ask the same of the honorable gentlemen. They say their liberal measures are now before the House, and this is the only chance the country has of passing them. If the country will adopt my honorable friend's motion, these so-called liberal measures will simply go with the present Government; and that will not be a great loss to the country. Does the honorable gentleman mean to say that we could not pass liberal measures if we got into office? Who stopped those measures before? The member who has just sat down stopped them—he helped to stop them. Let honorable members look at his votes and his speeches. The honorable gentleman gets up and tells us that we are opposing the passing of liberal measures. I get the credit of having a certain amount of assurance, but after that statement I yield the palm to my honorable friend in that respect. He has shown himself to be a much better man than myself in that quality, and I will always give way to him on that particular point. But I say that a more deliberate misstatement of absolute facts I never heard before in my life. We have had two spectres introduced into this banquet. First there is the spectre of the Upper House. You are told that, if this House passes this motion, the Upper House will do—what? What do they dare do? They will not go home until this Parliament finishes. If they do, we can do this: If they choose to neglect their business, and leave no quorum, we can do what a former Minister threatened to do—we can march a section of the Armed Constabulary there to keep a House. We are to be told that these important liberal measures are not to be passed because a few honorable gentlemen want to go home to shear their sheep. Talk about "all cry and no wool"! Those honorable gentlemen want all the wool, and the people are to have nothing but "the cry." Now, I look upon this as a warning of what will be done. If this House exercises its constitutional right of declaring that the Government does not possess the confidence of the House, then the Upper House will wield its influence adversely. We talk about the power behind the throne! I regard this as a distinct threat. The threat is this: "I tell you, the Opposition, that we possess a majority in the other Chamber. If we stand, these measures stand; if we fall, these measures fall." That is the meaning of it—neither more nor less. We are going in now for constitutional government; and so surely as the honorable gentleman takes up

that rôle, we will apply the constitutional screw. Then, there is another spectre—a spectre such as that described on one occasion by an honorable member of this House—the shadow of the shade of royalty. We are told that there may be an appeal to the country. Well, if we went to the country, there are several honorable gentlemen who would never come back here. We are told that if we dare to oppose the passing of these measures there will be a dissolution. That statement is one which I do not believe. Let them take that step. We dare them to take that step. This House has just come from the country. The Ministry who were turned out brought before the country liberal measures. The Ministry who have taken their place have put on our Liberal garments, and have brought forward our Liberal measures, and ask the House to support them. They have shown that this is not a question of measures, but of men. There is this distinction between the action of the late Government and that of the present Ministry: While the late Ministry did all the fighting, and placed these measures before the country, my honorable friends on those benches have simply taken these measures up because they could not help themselves. That, Sir, is the difference between them. We fear no dissolution. We defy the party who make that threat to carry it out. My honorable friend who uses that threat knows very well that such a thing will not take place. His friends and himself know that it will not take place. It is merely used as a sheet and lantern are used to frighten timid children. It is used to put honorable members off their guard—to make honorable members believe that a dissolution is imminent. I think the House will not be misled or coerced by a threat of that kind. Such a statement as that is the best evidence, to my mind, of the fact that those honorable gentlemen know that their position is indefensible. The fact of their making use of such an extraordinary threat shows that they find their position is untenable. This standard doctrine is laid down by all the authorities: that the essence of parliamentary government is, that the Government of the day should possess the confidence of the House. Sir, that being so, let them come to a vote at once. Until they do that—until they prove that fact incontestably—why should we pass these Bills—these Electoral Bills and other measures, which they do not believe in, and which they only take up because they are forced upon them—why should we do this, when we know that they do not possess the confidence of the House? In these days of hard times, what would be thought of a man who refused the offer of an overdraft at his banker's? Those honorable gentlemen cannot pay sixpence in the pound—they are bankrupt. We are offering them money to get them out of their difficulty, and they refuse it. We are prepared to give them supplies. We are ready to give them another advantage: we promise them that tomorrow, if necessary, we can take the bull by the horns. We have shown them how that could be done before. That was not the only shot in my locker; I had another left. I can

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produce one to-morrow. If people with whom you are dealing will take no offence—will pocket every insult; if they will eat dirt day by day and hour by hour—of course, I am speaking in a parliamentary sense—if they will do that; if they will be spat upon and jumped upon without saying a single word, but will turn the other side of their faces to have the operation repeated, nothing else will do—you can devise nothing else but the lasso to compel them one by one to leave those benches. We want a fair fight. We want to give them supplies. If they really wish to pass liberal measures they must pass them fairly. They have not attempted to do so. I trust the House will not be misled by the arguments or threats they have used. No Ministry holding office without a majority of the House to support them can pass those measures. The Governor should have no advice unless it came from a majority of this House. The Governor told Sir George Grey that if he did not accept certain advice he would have to resign, because his Government were in a minority. The present Government are now in a minority of four or five. Hence their unwillingness to enter upon a no-confidence debate. They do not intend to do that so long as they can help it. The honorable members on this side of the House believe in a fair, stand-up fight. There are gentlemen on those benches who ought not to be there. They have been there longer than they are entitled to be there; but by using fair parliamentary forms and rules, such as they are now using against us, we can simply evict them without much trouble. Honorable members talk of wasting the time of the country, and of doing no business. My answer to that is, that it arises mainly from the fact that the persons who should lead the House in doing the business are the obstructionists. They are sitting on those benches. Not a single Bill, not a single measure: they can do nothing but sit there, and wait until by threats of a dissolution, by threats of some other fearful evil to come, or by promises of bridges and railways without number, they may be able to gain an additional vote or two, and then come to a division—

Mr. MURRAY.—Speak for yourself.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—The honorable member says, Speak for myself. I am speaking for him now. I am speaking for his friends. There has been no single case in any parliamentary Government where the Ministry, in a minority, have refused to accept the vote of the House. I am speaking of parliamentary government for the last forty or fifty years, because prior to that parliamentary government could scarcely be said to exist. Therefore, if they want to pass these liberal measures, they have only to come to this House and say, "Gentlemen, in accordance with parliamentary government it is necessary that we should possess your confidence. That being ascertained, then we will ask you to pass these Bills." And if they will consent to go to a division now, and are successful, I shall be prepared, and I believe all honorable members on this side of the House will be prepared, to assist in carrying those measures through. I hope that honorable gentlemen

on this side of the House will not be alarmed at the statements which have been made by the members of the Government. I think they can afford to take these statements very quietly. My honorable friend the Premier is simply a plagiarist. He has borrowed my plan and Statement, and when he talks to me in the way he has done to-night, I can afford to look quietly at him. The thing is the purest "buncombe" in the world. There they are, without a majority, waiting until some accident or good fortune may bring them one or two people to swell up the division list. If I know our party, as I believe I do, not one man will swerve in his allegiance. We are determined that this House shall rule the country—that the majority of this House shall direct who shall be the leaders of the House; and if honorable gentlemen will hold office without that qualification, they must expect nothing but opposition. If they want liberal measures passed, those measures must be proposed by members who can control the House. I repeat that, if they bring on my honorable friend's motion, we on this side of the House will not discuss the question, but will go to a division right away, and settle the matter at once. You object, of course?

Mr. HALL.—Decidedly.

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Well, Sir, it means that the Bill cannot go further to-night—that is quite evident. But there is no mistake about this: that this motion does not prevent the passage of the Bill at a future stage. We to whom the Bill belongs—we from whom the Bill has been stolen—stolen, I say, for if this were a matter in relation to private property my honorable friends would be in the dock to-morrow; they could be brought up and tried for obtaining goods by false pretences—we who brought in these Bills will carry them through. We say we have a majority, and it is a fact. I must confess that I never beheld such a spectacle as is now presented by the honorable gentlemen who call themselves His Excellency's Advisers, Ministers of the Crown. There they are. They dare not put one foot before the other. They walk, Sir, on crutches. There they are, utterly powerless, utterly incapable of moving a single arm or leg, incapable of passing a single measure, afraid even to take the money we offer them; and still we are told that the colony is being governed. If it is being governed, then government has come to a pretty queer pitch. If you want a specimen of incompetence, there it sits on those benches. Why, Sir, those honorable gentlemen who call themselves Ministers of the Crown are but shadows. By Proclamation in the Government *Gazette* they hold the Governor's commission; but what does he believe? I presume they have told him that they command a majority of the House. They decline to answer. I take it for granted that they have told the Governor so. I invite them again, and this House invites them, to bring the thing to an issue at once. Even members of their own party ask them to bring things to a head. I protest against this attempt to postpone the public business, to refuse to accept supplies, and to delay things from day to day for the mere chance of getting one or two

uncertain members. I hope the House will accept the motion of my honorable friend.

Mr. McLEAN.—Sir, it is certainly very pleasing to hear the words "incompetent Ministers" coming from the mouth of the honorable member who has just sat down. Has not this House, by the largest majority ever known in New Zealand, ruled that the incompetence and maladministration of the honorable member unfit him to sit on those benches?

Mr. SHEEHAN.—Not this House.

Mr. McLEAN.—Sir, this House—

Mr. SHEEHAN.—No, no.

Mr. McLEAN.—The House of Representatives. As a mere matter of speech, I will please the honorable gentleman. The House told that honorable gentleman that he was the most incompetent Minister that ever ruled in New Zealand: still the honorable gentleman has the audacity to come forward and say that those honorable members are incompetent. Sir, I take it that the honorable gentlemen now on those benches are the most competent we have had on those benches for many a day; and, Sir, I tell that honorable gentleman that they are an honest Ministry, that this House can trust them, that this country can trust them, and that the interests of the country are safe in their hands. Here, forsooth, we have a charge of incompetency from a member of a Government who, I venture to say, have brought this colony into a most awful mess through their want of administrative ability and their inattention to the affairs of this country. We have these honorable gentlemen—we have first the late Minister for Public Works committing this country to, we may say, half the loan of five millions, without knowing whether it can be raised or not; and when the members of the Government are asked to produce the telegram they have received from England on the subject, they decline to lay it before the House. I take that to mean that the news is very bad, and other honorable members cannot help coming to the same conclusion. But still that honorable gentleman went on, letting contracts to the extent of half the loan, and the greater portion without the authority of this House. Those honorable gentlemen did as they pleased, and still they come and say the members of the Government are incompetent. Then let us take the Native land purchase. Did not the honorable member (Mr. Sheehan) stand up, when he and his colleagues took possession of those benches, and declare that he would carry out the policy of his predecessors—that was, to stop all Native land purchases, and only complete those which had already been commenced? Sir, the honorable gentleman was not very long on those benches before, after spending what this House allowed for Native expenditure, he increased that expenditure to such a pitch that he found he would be called over the coals when the House met. In order to avoid that, he scattered money over the country for other than actual purchases, and committed this country to land purchases of over a million sterling. This is the honorable gentleman who, when he took

possession of those benches, declared against those Native land purchases, and said he would have nothing further to do with them. Then, Sir, those honorable gentlemen go to the country, and they come back from the country in a minority in this House, notwithstanding that they endeavoured to mislead the country—that they declared that they wished the country to pass those measures they had brought before Parliament. Why, Sir, they did not tell the country that the whole House was anxious to pass these measures, but they went to the country, and not one of them ever mentioned the most important matter to the constituencies—that was, the matter of finance. Sir, they did not tell the constituents that they were bringing the finances of this country into such a deplorable condition. They never spoke of the deficiency that was accruing. They purposely hid that from the country, and I am perfectly sure that if they had laid bare the real state of the finances of the country they would have been very considerably defeated at the elections. When they came back to this House, we found them in such a position that we turned them off these benches by a majority of two. Now, Sir, let us take this side of the House. In getting a Government together, is it not an extraordinary thing, showing great loyalty to principles, that those gentlemen on this side of the House have allowed a Government to be constituted—men who might have expected that they would be called on to take part in the government of this country, and who knew that they were well entitled to it? Sir, have any of those gentlemen gone from this side of the House because they did not get seats on the Government benches? Only two gentlemen have gone from this side of the House because they were disappointed.

HON. MEMBERS.—No, no.

MR. McLEAN.—Is not this a great thing to say on this side of the House? I venture to say that if the honorable gentlemen on the other side formed a Government there would be a stampede of disappointed members from their ranks that would astonish them, and if the members were then divided the benches on the Government side of the House would be nearly vacant. If those honorable gentlemen got back on the Treasury benches again, how long would they continue there? Seeing that we are in this position—seeing that the late Government were turned out by a majority of two, and that, if a division were now taken, the position would be about reversed, or that the result would depend upon the casting vote of the Speaker—seeing that this is the case, is it not fairly a matter for consideration whether or not the people should be appealed to? I do not say this without regret, because I do not think many members would care about going back to the country so soon after a general election. Speaking to the Bill before the House, I have no fear that those honorable gentlemen who declared on the hustings that they would support these liberal measures, no matter from whom they came, will now belie their promises by walking into the lobby against these measures, in order that a number

of honorable gentlemen who hate them should thus be allowed to burke them—gentlemen who we know dislike them, and who warned the late Government that if they dared to pass them they would be found on the other side of the House. The honorable member for the Thames says, "They have stolen our measures." Who gave them the right to call them their measures? When these measures were last before the House did not that honorable gentleman vote against them? Did not the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan), and the honorable member for Christchurch City and the Thames, both vote against manhood suffrage when brought forward in this House by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, and also against triennial Parliaments? The honorable gentlemen on the Government benches voted for those measures, as I did myself, and shall do again. The honorable gentlemen opposite claim those Bills now as their own, and say they are satisfied that they will be carried. Sir, they are satisfied of that because they cannot help it. We know that the late Premier is a Conservative at heart, and that he only tries to carry the people with him. His every action proves it: he talks one way and acts the other. Then those honorable gentlemen say they are quite ready to grant supplies. They know perfectly well, and the country quite understands, that they are blocking supplies. Notwithstanding the violence of party strife, and notwithstanding that parties have been nearly equal, this House has never before refused to sanction supplies. And those honorable gentlemen, who have been declared by the House of Representatives to be the most incompetent Government that New Zealand ever possessed, wish again to rush on those benches; and it is they who are refusing supplies. Why did not those honorable gentlemen accept a reasonable proposition? Did not the Government offer last week that, if they were allowed to make their statements of policy, they would consent to the no-confidence motion being debated on Tuesday? If the honorable gentlemen were anxious to get on with the business of the country, why did they not accept that reasonable proposition? No, Sir; they thought they were masters of the situation. They thought they could bring forward a motion, and that they could stop the Financial Statement from being made. When they saw they could not do so, they professed to be quite willing that the Financial Statement should be delivered. Then they tried to stop the Native Statement by bringing on their motion; and again, when they found they could not help themselves, they said they wished that the Native Statement should be made. That was the position they took up; and I think it is quite right for the Government now to say, "These measures shall be kept before you until you pass them. When you have passed them, we will then consider your motion of want of confidence." For myself, I think reasonable opportunities were given to the honorable gentlemen. I would be no party to any unreasonable proposition from either side of the House; and I have no doubt that, were the honorable gentlemen opposite to make a reasonable proposal, it would not alto-

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gether be rejected. We know that parties are very equal in this House, and that they will continue to be so; and it is for every one having the good of the country at heart to endeavour to find some way out of the present difficulty. But if those honorable gentlemen think—two disappointed members having walked across to their side—they are going to get on those benches in spite of anything the Government may do, they are very much mistaken. A great deal of terrorism has been exercised in this House. Those honorable gentlemen who came here from the country for the first time were entitled to think and speak for themselves, and to vote according to their convictions; but honorable members have kept such a terror over them that they are afraid to do what is right, notwithstanding that their instincts may lead them that way. I have voted at elections for candidates on the opposite side to myself, because I believed them to be better men than those opposed to them, and I should do so again; and when members come to this House and see and judge for themselves, and then vote conscientiously as they think proper, I, for one, will not cast a slur upon them because they have probably changed their minds and voted in a direction different from that which they indicated on the hustings. They do not know what takes place in this House until they come here and see the position of parties, and then the idea that only measures and not men are important is dispelled. I say that without good men you cannot get good measures. We had the late Premier gulling this House into the belief that he was taking a measure through Parliament which was to be for the good of the human race, but because it did not suit his purpose to let it become law he threw it into the waste-paper basket, in order that he might still have it to dangle before the people. Now, what we say is this: that those measures shall not be dangled before the public any more, but that they shall become law, and that the late Premier shall lose his political stock-in-trade. There are one or two statements to which I should like to refer, but I am precluded from doing so, because they were made in a previous debate. I ask those honorable members who are unfettered not to be misled into the belief that by voting against these measures they are simply postponing them, but to understand that they will be playing into the hands of honorable members who hate these Bills, and who mean to burke them by every means in their power. And I ask those honorable gentlemen who are free to do as they like, who are free to go into any lobby they please—and there are a number of independent members in this House not tied to any party—I ask them not to be led away with the idea that they are not burking the measure. If anything takes place to prevent this Bill from passing, those gentlemen—especially those who declared they would support these measures no matter from what Government they came—will find themselves in a position before their constituents which will not be to their benefit. If passed they must be passed now that they are fairly before the country, and I hope those honorable gentlemen will be true to the pledges they

gave, and vote for the measures now that they are before the House.

Mr. TOMOANA.—I have only a few words to say. I am quite friendly with the members of both sides of this House. I rise to speak with reference to the Statement of the Native Minister. I listened patiently to hear his remarks with regard to the Native race; but I did not hear any good in them. I have since been very much hurt. I wish the House to hear what I have to say. I have asked the Ministers to seek for some other Native to sit in my place, because for many years my people have been suffering, some are now in gaol, and the women and children have also suffered, and nothing has been done in answer to their prayers to alleviate their sufferings. I said that I should vote and deal honestly with Mr. Hall; and I wish to go honorably from this seat, because I cannot see what benefits my people are to derive from what fell from the Native Minister. There was nothing I objected to in the individuals; but I could not see what good was to come from them.

[The honorable member, at the conclusion of his speech, left the Government benches.]

Mr. ANDREWS.—It is not my intention to delay the House very long. I may say, at the outset, that I have purposely refrained from speaking on many questions that have exercised my mind. Many times I have wished to express my views upon questions that have come before the House, but I have refrained from doing so because I wished to expedite the business as much as possible. Now, I wish to assure the House that I have not the slightest fear as to the passing of this measure, and I was therefore exceedingly sorry to hear the threats thrown out by the Colonial Treasurer, who said that if we prevented the passage of the Supply Bill we should lose sight of this measure altogether, and that that would be a great pity, because the people had been clamouring for a Triennial Parliaments Bill. Perhaps the honorable gentleman will allow me to say that I do not anticipate for one moment that the Bill will be rejected by this House. I am so perfectly satisfied of that, that I shall vote without any doubt for the amendment of the honorable member for Port Chalmers. But I should like to point out that the Government have put this Bill in the most awkward place they could put it. It is completely out of place. It is like putting the cart before the horse. If it had followed the Bill for the extension of the franchise, or the Bill for the redistribution of seats, I could have understood that some good would accrue from it; but to throw it before the House as one of those liberal measures the country has been clamouring for seems to me to be quite a mistake. I have not heard any member of this House declare that it was a matter of absorbing interest, nor have I heard outside that the people regard it as one of the great liberal measures they wish to see passed. It is a matter of experiment, and it is due to the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Stevens) to say that he was the first to introduce it to this House: he was the first to suggest a matter of this kind. I am in no way pledged to my constituents on the ques-

tion, but I can say that there is a desire on their part that some change should take place. I am therefore prepared to vote for it. I think that is all I need say with regard to the Triennial Parliaments Bill, except that I object to the place which has been given to it amongst these measures. I would ask the House to consider some of the remarks made by the honorable member for Waikouaiti, in which he said something to this effect: that young members were held in terror. I do not know what young members he is alluding to. All I can say is, that I am not held in terror. On the contrary, instead of being held in terror, I have had the warmest reception possible, an exceedingly good reception, on this side of the House; and from that side nothing could be more pleasing to me. There is no terror hanging over us. We have expressed ourselves in the clearest and most explicit manner, and we have stated our desire to get through the business of the session as speedily as possible. All I can say is, that if by not speaking I can further the business I shall be most happy to be silent; but there are so many reasons for speaking, and so many questions on which a member has something to say, that it is sometimes necessary for one to speak. Looking back at the time these debates have occupied, I shall not attempt to go through the speeches of the many speakers, and I wish it to be understood that I shall avoid, in all cases, calling names. Nor do I wish to impute any base or improper motives to any person. I would say, if an honorable member makes a statement here I shall accept it and believe him; and I hope honorable members will accept my statements in the same way. I am under no obligations to my constituents to follow any particular course. The only pledge I gave was to this effect: that, in the event of a motion of want of confidence being brought against the Grey Ministry, I would vote against that motion. Beyond that, I am not pledged; and, now that I have voted upon that particular question, I am perfectly free to vote as I like. I have further to say now, as an independent man, that I do not admire the tactics of the Ministry at present. I never could recognize such a position as the Ministry have taken upon themselves just now, nor am I ever likely to do so. I consider that no Ministry has a right to take and hold those benches as Responsible Advisers to the Governor, while in a minority; and I assume those honorable gentlemen to be in a minority. I say that at no time has any Government a right to sit on those benches when that is clearly understood to be their position. I believe this Ministry has only one claim to sit on those benches, and that is that they got there by a catch vote. I say that after careful deliberation and consideration of the question, and I repeat that it was simply a catch vote which placed those honorable gentlemen there. I do not charge the Premier with putting a catch vote forward for purposes of his own, but I think it was a party matter which led to its being done. But there is a great difference between a vote saying that a certain party has not the confidence of the House, and saying that those who get on

the Government benches instead of them have the confidence of the House. That does not by any means of necessity follow. I consider that by avoiding a direct vote of confidence or no-confidence in them the present Ministry show that they are sitting there simply by the advice of the Governor, and not as representatives of this House. They have never allowed themselves to get into that position, and that shows that they do not enjoy the confidence of the House; and I say that no Ministry ought to sit on those benches unless they are ready at any time to appeal to the House to support them on every important question, such, for instance, as the question of supplies. I think it is most monstrous for the Government to put that question off as they have done. And why do they do so? I understand that the Ministry demand to have a fair trial; and I, for one—and I believe the whole of my party—would be the first to give them that trial. No one could be more ready than I am to give every man fair-play, but a time comes when there is an end to fair-play. I would point out to the Premier a case in point. Before I left Christchurch to come up here, I wanted money from a man there to settle an account. He said to me, when I asked him for it, "I object to pay the money, until I go through the account and am satisfied of the correctness of it." I did not object to that; but, when I had given him a reasonable time and he did not pay me, I said, "Perhaps you want six months to go through it." That appears to be the position of the Ministry. They will not fix any time; it is quite indefinite. I was talking to the present Treasurer before he took office, and asked him, "What is your opinion of the finances of the country?" He said, "I do not know exactly. I only know that they are in a terrible muddle." Then I said, "That is not what I want to know. How do you expect to find the books of the several departments? Do you expect to find anything wrong in them?" And he said, "Oh, no;" and then he said, "So far as the actual Financial Statement is concerned, I could make one in twenty-four hours." He has had more than that, and he has made his Statement. It is not a statement of ways and means, but that is another matter to follow. We expected something horrible to be disclosed, but there was nothing of the kind. If I could get an assurance from those honorable gentlemen that they only required a day or a week, or even a month, I should be satisfied; but I must object to our being kept here from day to day with the expectation that something terrible is to be revealed, when I have come to the conclusion that there is really nothing to be revealed. If any one says to me, "Do you not believe there has been great extravagance, and that things have been managed in an awkward manner?" I admit it. But these are things to be found out and remedied; and, even supposing that nothing else is done, the change which has taken place up to the present time will be of great advantage to the country. I say that so far the Ministry have done good work, but the fault I have to find is, that they persist in sitting on those benches although they are in a minority: if we are to have good government in the country,

the Ministry of the day must not be in a minority. It is, as far as I am aware, contrary to the usages of Parliament, and it is contrary to the feelings and wishes of this House. I can state for myself—and I believe I speak for many others of my party—that if the Ministry are in a majority—even if that majority should be made by your casting vote, Sir—I will readily help them to pass the whole of these measures. But we want no more catch votes. Personally, I very much respect those honorable gentlemen, and have nothing to say against any of them; but it is not a question of mere men. They are sitting there as a Ministry in a minority, and therefore I shall oppose them. Let them take the proper position of a minority, and sit on the Opposition side of the House, and then they can assist in carrying these measures. If the measures are so dear to them, as the Colonial Treasurer says, that they cannot sacrifice their seat to secure these measures, then I fear they are only dear to them in name, and not in their hearts. They cannot value them as I do. I am prepared to sink my party feelings in order to have these measures carried; but I must say I object to beginning at the wrong end and passing such a—shall I call it?—stupidly- and awkwardly-placed Bill as the Triennial Parliaments Bill, when the others are left behind. I shall vote for them, whoever brings them forward, and I believe the majority of our party will do so also. As to the assertion that these measures will not be carried, there is no idea of such a thing. At all events, I have no fear in regard to that matter. I wish the House to understand me perfectly, in case I should not speak again. I do not want to get on those benches, and if I know anything of the secrets of my party I think I may say this: that we do not know whom we shall put on them. But then, Sir, we have a large party to select from, and, as this party constitutes a majority of the House, I do not think we shall have any difficulty in filling the Ministerial benches satisfactorily. And even supposing the proper men should not be placed there, I am not going to forego my principles, and I shall vote against their sitting there if they do not command a majority. I hope honorable gentlemen will look at the question in the same spirit that I do. The difficulty with me is, how to get out of our present deadlock, and to expedite the business. I do not know how that is to be done, but, if any means are found by which we can expedite business, I will stand by them. If even a dissolution of the House is necessary, I say dissolve at once. Let us send an address to His Excellency at once saying that this House cannot come to a conclusion, and that the only solution of the difficulty is a dissolution. I am prepared to go back to my constituents. I feel that I am here because a majority of the electors of my district believe I am a proper person to be here; but, if I do not represent the views of my constituents, I have no business here, and shall be very happy to go home and remain there. I think the Ministry should look at the matter in the same way. If they are not sitting there with the consent and wish of the House, they should resign at once. Personally, as I said before, I respect the honorable gentle-

men on those benches; but I shall respect them very much more if they have the manliness and sense of decorum to obey the will of the majority—if there is a majority—against them, in order to facilitate the business and uphold the honor of this House. I do not myself know for certain how the vote will go, nor do I believe the Ministry know; but they seem afraid to put the matter to the test. And why? If I am in the right I have a right to get an expression of opinion with me, and if I am in the wrong I must expect it to be given against me. So far as getting a majority is concerned, I am certain of this: that, if the new members of the House—some twenty-four or twenty-five, I think—were to meet in caucus, they could form a Ministry, and would secure a majority, if you would give them sufficient time, simply by promising to make roads and bridges. If we were to leave the present Ministry in office for another month, I have no doubt that they would get round them a majority; but is it fair to keep some eighty members here in the position that we are in, suffering inconvenience simply because those honorable gentlemen wish to retain place? As to the liberal measures, their safety is assured; almost every member of the House is pledged to them, and nothing can prevent them passing. But are the measures introduced by the present Ministry so very liberal? Let us just look at one—the Qualification of Electors Bill. There is clause 2, subsection (1.) That provides,—

“Every man of the age of twenty-one years or upwards having a freehold estate in possession, situate within the electoral district for which the vote is to be given, of the value of twenty-five pounds, whether subject to incumbrances or not, and of or to which he has been seized or entitled, either at law or in equity, for at least six calendar months next before the registration of his vote, is entitled to be registered as an elector and to vote at the election of members for such district for the House of Representatives.”

Now, if that is a liberal measure, I do not know what Liberalism is. If there is anything which tends to keep up Conservatism and the influence of class it is such provisions in our law as this. Here, in the next subsection, you have the manhood residential clause. Does that not embrace everything? What, then, is the meaning of this £25 qualification? Simply this: that certain classes may vote for twenty members of this House. And yet that is a liberal measure. If that is a specimen of the improved measures of the present Government, I hope none of them will be placed on the Statute Book. Whether it was brought forward by the present Government or by the late Government, I should equally object to such a measure. We want nothing of the kind contained in that subsection. If we claim to be Liberals, let us be Liberals. If all the elections in the colony were to take place on the same day—which I believe to be desirable—it would be less objectionable; but in any case I think the residential qualification should cover everything. Whoever proposes such a clause will find me opposing it. I need not say more on the present occasion. I wished to clear myself, and I think

I have said all that was necessary at the present time. I am quite prepared to hurry through these measures of reform, but I have no fear for them. They would go through, even if the present Ministry were opposed to them. They cannot be stopped by any man or by any scheme. If this House were dissolved, whatever party were sent back they would have strict instructions to carry out these measures.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The honorable gentleman who has just sat down has, upon this occasion, made, as he did on the first occasion when he addressed the House, a party speech without making himself acquainted with the particulars of which he was speaking as they related to parties in this House. He, for instance, just now read from the Qualification of Electors Bill a sentence which, if it stood alone, would certainly bear the construction put upon it, that it is not in every sense so liberal a measure as we have been promised. He says the qualification for electors is to be freehold of the value of £25. That is the first subsection of a certain clause; but if he had only gone on to the next subsection he would have read this:—

“Every man who has resided for one year in the colony and in the electoral district for which he claims to vote during the six months immediately preceding the registration of his vote, and is not registered in respect of a freehold qualification under this Act in respect of the same district, is entitled to be registered as an elector and to vote at the election of members for such district for the House of Representatives.”

Is that not liberal enough? If not, make it more so. Any one who has been within a district six months will have a vote.

Mr. ANDREWS.—One vote.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I apprehend that the honorable member for Christchurch City does not want one person to have more than one vote, and in another Bill Government has provided that he shall not have more than one. Can the honorable gentleman remember what it was the preceding Ministry proposed to do? Did they offer any qualification of this kind? If he had known what occurred in this House last session he would have known that half a dozen qualifications were proposed. There was no equivalent whatever for this £25 qualification. Nothing in their Bill was so much to the point as the provisions which the honorable member has just read and spoken against. Before the honorable member comes down to this House he ought to know what he is talking about. Then he complains that this Triennial Parliaments Bill is not in the right place. Instead of being in the first place, he says it ought to be in the last place. Well, are not the late Ministry responsible? The notice to introduce this Bill was in the first place, the Bill was introduced in the first place, and was placed first on the Order Paper by the Ministry which was sent off these benches; and yet the honorable gentleman comes forward to tell the House that the present Ministry has acted wrongly, and he, for one—so considerate is he—will not be entrapped into voting for that Bill in such a place. There is one little piece of advice I would

Mr. Andrews

like to give him, and it is, that he should keep his advice for his own side. It may be very well to give his opinion about this matter or that matter; but, when he takes to advising us as to what tactics we should adopt, he is talking about a matter which he knows nothing whatever about; and no doubt he will have to be some time in this House before he can instruct this side upon matters of that sort. Then the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) has boasted this evening of his power of obstruction. He says we are mere tiros at the business, and I quite believe him—I believe he knows more of that kind of thing than we do; but the boast of to-night is simply an old boast repeated. More than a week ago he uttered precisely similar sentiments. He says, “Do you suppose you can teach us to obstruct? We taught you, in 1877, all that you know, and you are very bad copyists.” Sir, I believe we should be very bad copyists, and I believe there are many members on this side of the House—I and others—who, if the party now in power were to employ such tactics as those of 1877, would certainly leave them. I believe no member of this party would agree either with the tactics of 1877, or with those the honorable gentlemen have exhibited during the past week. The honorable gentleman tells us that he wishes to proceed with the business, and that we are the obstructionists. But I would remind those gentlemen of this: On the 13th instant, a week ago yesterday, the leader of the Opposition wrote a note to the Prime Minister asking whether he would be prepared to make an arrangement to allow of the want-of-confidence motion coming on at an early date; and the reply was, that the Government was most willing to do so, but wished, first, to place before the country those measures which all parties say are needed. And the object was this: It was in order to put our reforms before the House in such a way as to show we were quite in earnest in our expressions of a desire for reform; it was in order to show we were going to produce better measures than were those of the late Government—that is to say, measures better adapted to answer the purposes contemplated; it was in order to show that we were true reformers—not like those who threw up their Bills last session; and it was in order that the details of these measures which had been contemplated by the present Ministry might be put before the country, so that the electors might judge who were the real friends of reform. This was on the 13th. On the following day, the matter again came up, and an offer was again made by the Government, a day being named. The Government took up this position: “We will get our Statement made up; we will get our Bills before the House; and on Tuesday week”—that was to-night—“we will go into the question of confidence.” How was that proposition met? The proposition of Monday was met with silent contempt. The proposition of Tuesday was met, not with silent contempt, but with a very open expression of contempt; and, when the honorable member for New Plymouth made a suggestion that we should meet on Monday to consider the question, there was no response from the Opposition benches. But

there was a response from these benches: we were willing to make an extra night; and therefore I say it is a shameful thing for honorable gentlemen to come here and misrepresent the whole aspect of affairs, saying that we are the obstructionists, and that they are the injured parties. When the honorable member goes back to Christchurch I hope he will take a true story with him; I hope he will examine into the question beforehand, will make himself master of the facts, will tell his constituents what the facts are, and will not give the garbled version he has given us of this Bill and the Bills of the preceding Ministry. Then we were told by, I think, the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan), who spoke to-night, that this Triennial Parliaments Bill is the Bill of the late Government, and not the Bill of my honorable friend at all. Well, I wish they would quickly settle the paternity of the Bill, and be done with it. Let us see how we stand in reference to it. So far as this measure is concerned, I will call attention to how much of it probably belongs to them. In the first place, I believe the words in italics are the words inserted by the present Government. Well, these occupy one-half of the Bill. In addition to that, I find that five lines of this short Bill are to be eliminated; so that, as it stands, there are just three lines in the Bill, apart from the title, belonging to the proposal of the late Government. But, supposing it to be the Bill of the late Government, how do we stand in reference to that? Why, I was amazed the other night at what took place when the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government introduced the Bill. One honorable gentleman, the Apollo of the party, the chief speaker, shouts out, "It is not our measure at all; we know nothing about it." Then another gentleman, whom I may call the Jupiter Tonans of the party, calls out, "It is ours; it is not yours at all." Then the Mercury of the party exclaimed, "It is not your party's Bill; it is mine. What right have those gentlemen to father my little bantling?" I wish they would settle the paternity of it amongst them. This is the Bill of the present Government; this is the Bill that the present Government propose to place before the electors; it is the Bill by which they propose to be judged; and it differs in this important respect from the other Bill: that, whereas the Bill of the previous Government would give this House a tenure of five years, the present Bill limits our tenure to three years. Then we have been told to-night that the late Government was really the author of all the Bills of a liberal character put before the House, and that the present Government have no standing at all in their advocacy. Well, it was revealed to us the other night, by referring to *Hansard*, that about one-half of the members of the late Ministry had voted at one time or another, in recent sessions, against every one of the principles contained in these Bills. Yet they say they are the only persons who ought to have charge of them, because they alone can do justice to the principles contained in them. Why, the Opposition can say nothing as bad as that of the party

on these benches, taken as a whole. If the records were carefully looked into, I think the old stagers in this House would have rather a black record on most of these things. Then we were told that, on account of the delinquency of certain members of the present Government, they could not be trusted with these measures. It is said that these measures are for the good of the people, and that these men have all their time been employed in building up an aristocracy. At one time it is a genuine aristocracy, and at another moment, when it suits the whim of the speaker, it is a sort of bastard aristocracy. However, it is said that these gentlemen have been building up this aristocracy with such vigour that they are not to be trusted with Bills to emancipate the people. But how is it we never get any answer to the allegations on this side of the House that this aristocratic element was built up by the honorable gentlemen themselves? How is it that we get no answer to the statement about the 80,000-acre block in the Cheviot District? The charge remains that it was through the measures of the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) that this large amount was given to this particular individual. Instead of an answer, there was this red-herring of the "gridiron" brought before us. Now, with regard to that, the honorable member for Cheviot the other day said that this gridiron extended to the enormous amount of 2,000 acres. The Premier says 5,000 acres. Well, I will take the larger figure; although that is still an unsupported statement. But, whether it be 2,000 acres, 5,000 acres, or 20,000 acres, I say that is a mere bagatelle compared with this single estate given in the way indicated to-day to this one individual. The other day my motives were questioned because I put a certain question upon the Order Paper. I was told that that was a very wrong thing indeed. Now, my reason for putting this question was very simple. It was to get at the truth, in order to expose this humbug that is going on of profession as against practice. We are told over and over again that certain parties in the House and their friends want to keep down a landed aristocracy, want to cut up the country into small lots, want to prevent the accumulation of large estates in a few hands. And this is the way they attempt to accomplish their object: They gave, as we heard to-day uncontradicted, 80,000 acres of land in one district; and at this very moment, at the public expense, they are surveying a large block of land, variously estimated at from 30,000 to 50,000 acres, beyond the Mokau for one man. What is the excuse for it? They pretend it is to get a footing in that country. Why, we already have a footing in the country. There is already land in that country belonging to the Government, which they have bought out of the public funds. It is also an undoubted fact that those honorable gentlemen have actually given facilities, within quite recent times, within three months, for the acquisition of an enormous estate for one man. And what is the character of this estate? It is said to be the best land north of the Mokau. It is valuable not only as agricultural land, but it is still more valuable on account of its enormous deposit of coal, of its

enormous deposit of limestone, its deposit of iron, and its probable deposit of gold. Now, that is a large tract of country; and when I hear an honorable gentleman laughing, as if gold, coal, limestone, and iron could not all be found on one estate, I ask him to remember that 50,000 acres mean a large tract of country. Upon undoubted authority, I say that three of those minerals are found there in abundance. On the same undoubted authority, I say the land is first-class; and I put the gold entirely as a speculative matter. Well, what are we to say of the conduct of those gentlemen in coming here and hoodwinking the public by pretending that they are against large estates, when at the very moment they are talking they know that, at the public expense, and not private expense, they are fostering the acquisition of large estates? I do not deny my motive in putting that question on the Order Paper, and I have other questions to put on the Paper as soon as I can ascertain the proper form. I do not want to bring in names more than I can help, or they would have been on the Paper before now. Then, we were told by the honorable gentleman that we ought to revert to the American system. With an assumption of knowledge which is very remarkable—or, rather, which would have been remarkable to me a month ago—we were told something in reference to the American system. We were told that in America large estates are not accumulated; that land is given very cheap; and that, notwithstanding its cheapness, it is scattered amongst the people in small quantities. Sir, there is no law in America at all against a man accumulating as much land as he likes to pay for. The land is 5s. sterling an acre—that is a dollar and a quarter—and you may take as little or as much as you like; you are not restricted in any way. The farms are larger in America than in any other country in the world. What we would call an immense run of 30,000 or 40,000 acres is there merely considered a farm. I say the true principle for this country, the true principle for America, and for every other country is not to bolster up estates, not to make large estates by legal enactment, not to help men to accumulate them by legal enactment or by special action on the part of the Government, and on the other hand, not to prevent men from holding them either by law or custom, but to let Nature have her way. If it be a natural thing for a man to have a larger quantity of land rather than a large amount of money, let him have it. If it be natural for estates to be cut into small pieces, is it wise to interfere with economic laws? Those laws are as certain to vindicate themselves, either by their penalties or by their rewards, as any laws can be. We know that in America there is no taxation of land. We were told that the American estates were kept down by taxation. I deny it. There is no State in America where land is specially taxed. The Government of America does not tax land. The States tax land only as they tax other property. In almost every State there is a property-tax, and therefore, in that sense, there is a land-tax. There is a property-tax, and you have to make a return of it for taxation.

Colonel Trimble

The land, as land, is not taxed at all; it is taxed simply as any other article of property that a man possesses is taxed. We were told that there was no terrorism exercised to get votes. The memory of honorable gentlemen seems to be very defective. Why, Sir, you ruled out of order to-day an extraordinary motion of terrorism. I want to know how it is that one particular member has been hunted down, or attempted to be hunted down, in this House. Was there not an attempt made this day to put on the Order Paper a notice of motion for the very object of terrifying that gentleman into voting on that side of the House? The honorable member for Christchurch City says he has not been bullied. I believe it. He is just the kind of man to be patted on the back; there is no necessity for attempting to terrify him. I would recall for a moment the attention of the House to the Bill that is before us. I would again make a suggestion for the consideration of the House, and it is this: that we should get leave to go on with business. We can soon clear off the Order Paper. I venture to say that there will be no inclination on this side of the House to oppose the fair discussion of the merits or demerits of Ministers. Let those gentlemen conduct the business of the House in a natural and orderly way, and I venture to say that, in a very short time, the wishes of the honorable gentlemen on the opposite side will be gratified, and that a full discussion will take place as to what the present Ministry have done and as to what they ought to have done. The question is of importance, I think, to reformers. I have probably as much experience of the way of getting reform as any man in this House. I would just remind real reformers in the House of this: that, in the midst of our agitations at Home, we always took those measures of reform that we could get, even as an instalment. I would remind honorable gentlemen of one particular occasion, which is ever memorable in the history of reform—I would remind honorable gentlemen of the position of affairs in 1866 and 1867. Owing to a combination, which I need not refer to, upon one incidental vote, the Liberal Ministry of the day went out of office. They gave place to a Ministry in an undoubted minority—an unquestionable minority—so unquestionably in a minority that Her Majesty even wished that her Ministers should not resign. The opponents of the Ministry, knowing the difficulty of the position, had no desire that they should resign. The new Ministry took office in an undoubted minority, and no attempt was made during the whole of that session to displace them. During the session of 1867 this same Ministry, still in a minority, remained on the Treasury benches. They continued, during the whole of that session, to administer the affairs of the country without one single factious vote. They brought forward one of the most revolutionary Bills that were ever introduced into the House. It was filled with provisions which either were meant to make reform inoperative, or which had that tendency. What did the real reformers in the House do? They did not bring forward a motion of want of confi-

dence. They did not say, "You shall not pass that Bill; we have asked Her Majesty to displace you." No; they allowed the Bill to go to the second reading, and it went into Committee. Wherever there was a defect in the Bill, they remedied the defect, as far as they were able; and such a democratic measure came out as we certainly did not expect to find in our generation. Now, look at the conduct of the so-called Liberals here and to-day. We have a Ministry in office—I will not say in power—which has given unmistakable evidence that they not only profess liberalism, but that they are determined to give measures of reform to the country such as their opponents on the opposite side of the House never contemplated: they make them more liberal, more comprehensive, and more simple in their terms; and how are they met? Those who call themselves Liberals, but are not Liberals, say, "We will not have your measures at all; we will simply take your place; we will turn you out; whatever becomes of these measures, you must leave." They simply obstruct the business of the House, obstruct measures of reform, in order to carry out their own whim. Look at their action with regard to the Upper House. How could honorable gentlemen opposite sit quietly and listen to the pretended expressions of awe as to the action of the Upper House? Is it not a fact that the leaders of that party tried to throw contempt on the Upper House on every occasion—that the leaders of that party say that the Upper House ought to be abolished? Have not the leaders of that party done everything they could to bring it into contempt by the nominations to it which they have made?

Hon. MEMBERS.—"Oh, oh!" "No, no."

Colonel TRIMBLE. — Honorable gentlemen will have an opportunity of defending the large introduction of members into that House when they get up to speak. I only say that the leaders of that party say that that House ought not to be there in the state in which it is. They complain that its members are gentlemen at large, with £200 a year for life, and to show their contempt for that Chamber they have sent more members to it than any other Government ever did. I say that to threaten this House with anything like awe from that House is simply nonsense. My friends on the Government benches are not such fools as to do that. If they were, those honorable gentlemen would not be such fools as to be awed. It is a mere pretence on the part of those honorable gentlemen, who are simply drawing a red herring across the trail; but it will not do. A curious incident occurred to-night—I was very much struck with it. It was the unbounded glee with which those honorable gentleman saw an honorable member leave those benches and go off to these back benches. No doubt we shall hear something about it in the papers. As far as I am concerned, I think that this party is well rid of those who do not understand Liberalism; and I think he will be a man with a considerable amount of faith who can say that the Maori members of this House understand the questions that are contained in these Bills. I think, therefore, Sir, that honorable members,

both Europeans and Maoris, who do not understand liberal measures, and cannot discuss them, and cannot comprehend them when they are placed before them, are better relegated to that side of the House; and I, for my part, would be glad to see any man not a real Liberal go over to them, and then we shall know exactly how we stand. I shall not be afraid of being in a minority for a time. I have been too well used to it to be afraid of being in a minority. I hope honorable members will take into consideration the suggestion I have made—that the Government, instead of being obstructed, should get leave to go on with the business until we get to the natural conclusion of it with the vote of want of confidence, if that be the wish of the House, or of thanks, if that be the wish of the House.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—As a new member of the House, I am impelled to say a few words on the subject under consideration, in consequence of the iteration and reiteration of what seems to me to be a very false issue. I always listen with the greatest attention to what is said by the honorable member for Grey and Bell, and I should certainly listen to him with greater pleasure if his knowledge were not so encyclopædic and his accuracy so painful. I am not going to follow the honorable member in everything he said. He has referred to the changes that have taken place in the opinions of honorable members on both sides of the House, and *Hansard* has been ransacked for proofs. I do not care two-pence for that. *Hansard*, as Lord Beaconsfield said, is the mere "Dunciad" of politics, and nothing more; and the honorable member cannot forget that Mr. Gladstone, one of the most eminent statesmen we ever had, and one of the highest character England ever produced, began his political career by writing a book in advocacy of the union of Church and State, but disestablished the Irish Church; and I hope he will live to disestablish one or two more before he dies. Now, about these 80,000 acres in the famous territory of Cheviot. I think the explanation given by the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) was perfectly satisfactory. The explanation is this: He reduced the price of the land in the hope that the land would be bought by working-men—by ordinary farming men—in small quantities—that they would be able to buy it at a small price; not dreaming that some speculator would drop in and buy it all. The great evil we shall have to contend against in this matter will be land-sharks coming and endeavouring to upset the best laws we may make, either by dummies or by some miserable arrangement for the purpose of getting land. That is the thing which this House must set itself against. I have no knowledge of the 30,000 acres referred to by the last speaker. If any member of the late Government has been aiding any individual in getting 30,000 acres of land, I say he has my thorough condemnation, whoever he is; but I understand that these 30,000 acres are not the property of the Government at all—that it does not belong to the Crown at all, but is the property of the Natives, and is being surveyed for these Natives in order that

Europeans, one or more, may step in as a sort of interim or temporary possessors of this land, so that the benefits of civilization may, to a certain extent, penetrate into that part of the country. That is my impression of that matter. Of course times arise of expediency; and statesmanship is, in many respects, a matter of expediency, and must be determined by the particular circumstances of the case. But what I rose to say is this: that this discussion at present seems to me to be beside the point. I have no strong feeling at all, as some honorable members may have, against those gentlemen now occupying the Government benches. Although I have not the honor of their personal acquaintance, I may say that I have a great respect for them, and, under many circumstances, would be delighted to see them where they are. But the question before the House is one of very great constitutional importance, and it is impossible, I find now, to get one individual to put himself in the place of another. I find the gentlemen on that side of the House getting up one by one and saying, "Let the business of the House go on," and they will not see, as we see, that it is they themselves who are obstructing business. The proposition made to them is this: "You have not the confidence of this House. Put it to the test, and settle it." I am astonished at the course pursued by the honorable gentlemen. They cannot be seeking to cling to those seats for the sake of office itself. This test is put before them, and I should suppose that they would have responded with alacrity, and would have taken up the words of Montrose,—

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his desert is small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
And win or lose it all.

As the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews) said, they gained their present position by a catch vote, or a scratch vote: at all events, it was by the vote of one member over and above the votes of the members on the other side.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Two.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—One. It was one member. I regret somewhat that that vote should have been given by my honorable colleague the member for Wellington City, who, as I understand, promised that he would support the Government. He shares in the prejudice that exists against the honorable member for Christchurch City (Sir G. Grey); he shares in feeling with the sheep-folks and the big folks, and he followed them into the lobby in order that the honorable member might be driven from power: but he has now an opportunity of retrieving his mistake, as the late Premier has retired from the position of leader, and he can now give a vote to put in a Liberal Government which is acknowledged to have a majority in this House. That is the allegation before the House—that this Government has not its confidence; and the Opposition go further and say, "Put it to the test. If you have the confidence of this House by so much as the single vote you had before, the Opposition will itself submit loyally to that de-

cision, and will work with you and carry out all the practical measures of reform." For myself, I will not say a word of opposition during the whole of this session if it is so decided; but, if it is otherwise, why not retire and let the business of the country go on? Now, Sir, we have been treated to a great deal of constitutional law. What I say is this—I may be wrong, but my idea of it is this: that the majority of this House is above any precedent whatever. This is the supreme Judicature, and we must be governed by the decisions of this House. We have had a great many constitutional doctrines brought under our notice, and honorable members have got up one after another: A has told us one doctrine, and B has followed him with a perfectly antagonistic doctrine, and that is followed with a third, differing altogether from the other two; and the whole of these doctrines have been enunciated with a solemnity that would have become a conclave of Daniels come to judgment. I have a great respect for constitutional law; but there must be much mobility in all constitutional law, because it is in the nature of things, and it is the lesson of history, that freedom is broadened down from precedent to precedent, and we have to modify precedent according to the circumstances of the case, so that, whenever a precedent fails to carry out the purposes of the majority of the Legislature, we require to make some new precedents. If we are to continue to go on in the old ruts, there is no progress to be made. We have been told of a constitutional doctrine which decided in this way: We were told that the Premier, having carried a vote of no-confidence in the late Government, by the very same vote had carried a vote of confidence in the gentlemen now on those benches. That is to say, by voting against the known, we also voted for the unknown. Supposing the Premier, instead of "all the talents," had put upon those benches all the dunces of the Conservative party—but perhaps I should not speak of dunces; therefore let me say all the Ishmaelites, or all the Philistines—would it follow in that case that his vote of confidence in those gentlemen would have been established? I think not; common sense revolts against it. Let me put it in another way. When the leader of the Opposition goes over to the Government benches—as he will do in a day or two, I hope—is it to be supposed that I am pledged to approve or support the gentlemen he may appoint? Certainly not. I do not know anything about them, and I am not going to promise them a blind support. There was a more dangerous doctrine cropping up all the time, and which the honorable member for Grey and Bell has given us once more—that these gentlemen, having obtained a commission from the Governor to sit on these benches, may sit upon them until they choose to leave them. I protest against that doctrine. They are not the Government of this House; they are the Government of His Excellency. And when I say that, I wish to say something more. We have heard a great deal on this point from the honorable member for Avon. He got very excited, not only to-night, but on the previous sitting-day, and

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told us that we were dragging the Crown on the floor of this House, dragging the Crown through the mud, and so on. Why, the Crown—if you choose to call it the Crown—the Governor is not the Crown, and this House is not the House of Commons. The Governor is not the Crown; and the Governor is responsible for a great many of his actions, although the honorable member for Avon is perfectly willing to father them all. I say the Governor was never dragged through the mud so much as he was to-night by the Premier. They say they will hold those benches in opposition to a majority of this House—because I assume that there is a majority against them; and, if they say there is not, let them put it to the test and settle it at once. I am bound, seeing that they will not put it to the test, to assume that there is a majority against them. I say that, with a majority against them, they told us they would hold their seats, first, until there had been a Statement from the Colonial Treasurer. Well, we got that Statement, and it did not alarm us after all. The Colonial Treasurer was there, and he spoke about finance, and rolled the word “finance” under his tongue as if it were a sweet morsel, and it seemed to give him as much comfort as the word “Mesopotamia” gave the old lady of whom we have heard. He gave us a large number of figures, and verified the saying that “figures, like soldiers, will face any way.” The fact is, his figures proved two things to us. They proved, I am sorry to say, that the late Government were rather too extravagant—and for that they have to be condemned—and they proved in the second place that the revenue had fallen off very greatly, which might have been expected, because we have had hard times, and people have not been able to buy land, in consequence of which the land sales have fallen off very much, and there was a great mistake in the calculation regarding that. But the whole secret of this finance, as far as it came out, was simply this: that we require to have a sweeping reduction in the whole of our expenditure from top to bottom. We require economy, in fact; and the whole secret of success in regard to finance is simply economy. All the talk about finance, and some wonderful thing being done by the present Colonial Treasurer, is so much moonshine. He has paid very great attention to figures, and I have a great respect for the way in which he manipulates them; but I must tell him in all frankness that there are a couple of dozen or more gentlemen in this House who can manage finance as well as he can. It is the greatest mistake in the word to suppose that he is a heaven-born financier and knows more of the subject than other gentlemen. Then we were told to wait until we had got the Native Statement. Well, we have got that, and that too has not contained any very startling revelations. It has shown us this, certainly: that the department has been managed in a very loose and lax way, and a mode of administration adopted which ought not to be permitted to continue. But it has proved this: that the whole system is radically wrong, that any person connected with its administration will in a very short time get radically wrong too, and that the remedy is

to get the whole system swept away as soon as possible. That cannot be done at once; it can only be done gradually. But the more speedily and surely it is done away with the better. We shall never enjoy peace and comfort until we be “just, and fear not,” with the Native race. Well, we got the Native Statement, and now we are told that we are to wait until the Government carry their measures. That seems rather a long time, I must say. I come back, therefore, to this point—if I might be allowed to refer to a statement often made by the honorable member for Wai-kouaiti, in those dulcet tones with which he so frequently charms this House. The honorable gentleman tells us that some fearful discoveries are to be made, and he gives us to understand that he could “a tale unfold” that would be something dreadful; but I am convinced of this: I do not say it would be a tale told by any one of the particular class of unfortunates referred to by Macbeth; but the tale itself would partake of the character of that told by his unfortunate—as, “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” The honorable gentleman has talked about the “Hinemoa”—until I suppose every member of the House is tired of the subject; and he has moved for all sorts of returns—and much good may they do him when he gets them. There was a steamer which belonged to the Government, and which was at one time in charge of the honorable member when he held the high and responsible office of Commissioner of Customs. Well, it was a very nice thing, on Saturday afternoons, to see the big-wigs of Wellington going on excursions in the “Luna,” under the guidance of the Commissioner of Customs; but I think he might have given a chance to the poor working-men. I come back to the one point, and it is what really hardens me on this whole question. The honorable gentlemen on this side of the House are anxious that the business of the country should go on, but will set themselves determinedly against what I believe to be an invasion of the rights of this House—against those honorable gentlemen persisting in occupying the Government benches without having a majority in this House. I myself believe that that is an invasion of the rights of this House. This House is the representation of the people of New Zealand, and the majority of the representatives ought to rule; and any interference—I do not care if it come from His Excellency or any other person—with the rights of a majority of this House ought not to be tolerated. England is said to be the mother of Parliaments; and our forefathers did not contend against kings, and did not win parliamentary freedom and parliamentary rights for us, that we should barter them away at this far end of the world in order to maintain class and caste against popular rights. I say we ought to have this matter settled. If the Government have a majority in this House, then they shall have the whole of us with them; and, if they have not a majority, they ought not to get up and tell us we are obstructing the business, and they ought not to pretend to proceed with these measures, because they know perfectly well they cannot go on. And to tell us that we shall

probably sacrifice these measures! Why, there is not a person who knows me but is aware that I am in favour of triennial Parliaments and in favour of all these liberal reforms; and I shall go into the lobby with the most perfect comfort, knowing that nobody will misunderstand the vote I shall give. Therefore I do say that we ought not to waste any more time. I repeat exactly the words, as nearly as I can, of the honorable member for Grey and Bell: Let us not obstruct business any longer; for it is on that side the obstruction is. How easy it is to have it settled! Let it be settled; and let us get on with the work.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I cannot allow this debate to close in this manner. I am not going to allude to any of the speeches which have been delivered this evening, but to a remark which was made by the honorable member for Grey and Bell in reference to a member of this House who, I think, was the last man to whom such a term should be applied as the honorable gentleman used. I allude to the Native who walked from the Government benches to-night, Mr. Tomoana. That honorable member is not to be compared with men who, after having eaten your salt and wormed themselves into your confidence, have abused you before the House, and have betrayed those by whom they have been trusted. He is not to be treated like such men. He got up manfully in the House and stated fairly and honestly his reasons why he could not remain in the Ministry. He accused none of them of any fault. He simply stated the reasons which prevented him from remaining with the Government, and stepped down from his seat like a chief, as he is, and walked to the seat which he now occupies. I regret very much that a gentleman holding the high position which the honorable member for Grey and Bell does should have applied a term in the manner in which he did.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Perhaps the honorable gentleman would mention the term which he says I applied to the honorable member.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I will not disgrace myself by doing so.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I submit, Sir, that I did not use any term towards the honorable gentleman which was at all disgraceful.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It was so closely applied that any one with any understanding would know it. I regret very much that it should have been applied. The honorable gentleman stepped down like a chief, and all I wish to say is, that I think the honorable gentlemen on those benches should follow his example. Do not let them be put to shame in that manner. Last session or the session before I defended a vote which I gave, and it was an accusation raised against me when I again stood for a seat in this House. I defended the vote I gave, on the ground that the Maoris are entitled to much greater privileges than we are, and I am more convinced to-night that I was right by the difference in the conduct of the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District and the conduct of the honorable gentlemen who remain on those benches.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I ask the honorable

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gentleman to state the words I used. I deny that I applied any disgraceful words to the honorable member.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot force the honorable member to repeat words used by any other honorable member. It will perhaps be sufficient if you state to the House that you did not make use of any words that could convey the impression attributed to your language.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I say again, Sir, that I regret exceedingly that those honorable members opposite did not follow the example of their late colleague, who, I expect, felt more than he expressed. He no doubt felt that as a man he was not going to sit there to be taunted with not daring to come out to fight. I have no doubt that was the feeling in his mind—that he could not sit there and be taunted as a coward. I am not going to enter into the question to-night, because I suppose that for some nights, or probably some weeks longer, we shall have this performance continued. I simply rose to commend to the Government the example which has been set them to-night by the Native chief.

Mr. MOSS.—I think it is time this came to an end, and I propose that we remain here until it does come to an end. I, for my part, am quite prepared to do so. I feel confident that we are lowering the whole Parliament in the eyes of the country by our proceedings, and that it will not be long before the conduct of the honorable member who left the Government to-day creates an impression on the minds of the remaining members. If we keep them here so that the impression will not be worn off, they will follow the example of their late colleague—we shall see them all gradually leave those benches. The thickness of cuticle which those honorable gentlemen have displayed throughout this debate is something astounding. When they took their seats on those benches I thought to myself, "Now we shall see something of the chivalry of debate. These are the Bayards, not the diehards, of Parliament. These are the gentlemen who hold themselves up as models of constitutional deportment. These are the gentlemen who will teach us how to rule." But what do we see? We see them sitting there supported by honorable members who tell us, one after the other, that we are obstructing the business, and that they cannot get on. Sir, it is notoriously the reverse. But I will not discuss the subject further, as I am just told it is the wish of both sides that we should come to a division.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I am sure there are many members on the other side of the House who feel very sadly the position they are in. I am sure the honorable member for Akaroa must feel ashamed of the position he is in. He certainly looks a model of decorum; but he is lending himself to make this House a discredit to the country. I call upon these honorable gentlemen to vote with us. They have said they have nothing to object to in the members on these benches. They say they agree with the Government, and the only thing they disagree with is its staying on these benches in a minority; but, if they would act in accordance with their statements, the Go-

vernment would not be in a minority. There will be a good majority if they will vote for us. I tell honorable members that there will be a majority, and a good majority, before we are done with these benches. We are going to hold to these benches because of the unconstitutional course adopted by the other side. All constitutional precedent demands that we should have a trial, that we should be heard, that our measures should be discussed, and that we should show the country the position in which we are placed. Now, I ask the House to consider the position of the Government. We have already disclosed a state of things which the country is fast waking to, if this House is not. The administration of the past two years has been such as to reflect the highest discredit upon those who have had the management of it. Then, again, we do not know who is the leader of the party that is trying to take these benches by storm. We find two or three of those members getting up and saying distinctly that those gentlemen who have been condemned in the most emphatic terms for their past administration are to be put back on these benches. I say that we are bound to stand by my honorable friend the Premier, who turned those gentlemen off these benches, and say that those men who have so grossly mismanaged the affairs of the country shall not come back. I want to know what we are going to have. Is Sir George Grey to be again placed on these benches? Let there be no mistake about the matter. There is no member of this House who has such a following as Sir George Grey has. He will be on these benches as surely as I stand here, and I warn honorable members who preach strongly on that subject to take care of what they are doing. I do not wish to see Sir George Grey on these benches. We have had enough of Sir George Grey, and we have had enough of those honorable members who have been there during the past two years: they have sickened the people. It amused me to hear the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) talk of members on these benches going back to the obscurity from whence they came. What position is that honorable member in, that he should talk of honorable members on these benches in that way? Where did he come from? I say that it is a very sad reflection that the House, having on two occasions pronounced its judgment on the maladministration of the past, should now quietly be content to submit to the return to these benches of the honorable member for the Thames. The country is watching us at the present time with a feeling of disgust, to think that we should so far stultify ourselves as to undo what we have deliberately done. Sir, the colony from end to end must be thoroughly dissatisfied with the administration of the past. The only desire of those gentlemen is to return to office, and I say that in the history of this colony there was never such a state of maladministration as during the time of their government. The public could not get its business done. The country has had enough of wretched buncombe cries. What it wants is administration. It wants roads and bridges. It wants schools. It does not want men who merely devote their time

to concocting memorandummiads to lead the Governor of the colony into traps. It does not want elaborate theories for forming Liberal Associations throughout the colony. What it wants is good administration. When the people think of what is happening in our lunatic asylums and in our gaols, and when they think of the unfortunates of the country who are lying sweltering in dens that are unfit for pigs, what will they say when they see men in high positions sitting with a sort of ghoul-like leer, rejoicing over temporary political triumphs, while their fellow-men are being utterly neglected? When we think of the things that have happened—when we think how the country rang from one end to the other with the wail that arose from the widows and orphans of the men who lost their lives at the Kaitangata disaster—when we find from the papers in this House that that disaster was simply and solely in consequence of the gross administrative neglect of the late Ministry—

Mr. MACANDREW.—Shame.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—When we know that a distinct warning was given weeks before, as is shown by the papers on record in this House, that there would be an explosion unless steps were taken to prevent it, I say that those honorable gentlemen ought to cry "Shame," and cry "Shame" again. I am not going to talk against time—I hope the House will not submit to that. I hope we are not come to those degrading tactics that are threatened to be brought against us at the present time.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I think it is very much to be regretted that the honorable gentleman should have lost his temper. It is very clear that, although we are now discussing the adjournment of the debate, we are in reality discussing the no-confidence motion, and the sooner we come to a division the better. I hope there will be no more talk, but that we shall come to a division at once.

Mr. McLEAN.—Before we come to a division I should like to say something in reply to the attack which has been made upon myself. I merely wish to say that anything I did in the way of giving entertainments I paid for out of my own pocket. The expense did not come out of the public purse, as it does in the case of those honorable gentlemen. I put my hand in my own pocket and pay for every entertainment I give. Formerly the Premier had £500 added to his salary for the purpose of giving these entertainments, and the late Premier pocketed it, and gave no entertainments. I can also say that when I was in the Government no poor person ever came to me and asked for relief without getting it: I should like to know how much has been done in that way by the late Ministry. The honorable member for Wellington (Mr. Hutchison) said I stated I was going to expose some great scandals. I do not wish to go into these matters, because it is not to the advantage of the House; but do not all members of the House know that these things have been going on? He must know that when a Committee was asked for, to inquire into the Native expenditure, and particularly into the land purchase expenditure,

those honorable gentlemen opposite dared not allow that Committee to be appointed. There are, besides, matters connected with the public works that require looking into. I put a question to the late Minister for Public Works the other day, as to whether he charged the rails he was laying down to maintenance or to construction. He declared they were put down to maintenance; but now, when we look into the matter, we find that they are mostly put down to construction. That in itself is a most serious matter, for it is a matter of whether the railways have or have not been paying what they have been said to be paying. If they will consent that a Committee shall be appointed to classify that and the Native expenditure, and search into all these things, I venture to say that there will be disclosures sufficient to prevent some of those honorable gentlemen getting back on the Treasury benches again. I do not make these statements hurriedly, and I say that they are true. I do not mind the honorable member attacking me as he did, but I defy him or any other person in this House to attack me justly for any maladministration, or to find any fault with my public or private character.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Hear, hear, except in making reckless statements.

Mr. McLEAN.—If I made reckless statements, why did the honorable gentleman stop the appointment of that Committee to inquire into them? What about this cab-hire and the thousands of pounds spent in that reckless way?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I really think the honorable gentleman is introducing matter not relevant to the present question.

Mr. McLEAN.—I simply got up to answer the statements of the honorable gentleman when he attacked myself, and I have no desire to take up the time of the House further.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, the honorable gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, or, at least, one of the Commissioners for executing the office of leader of the Opposition—

Mr. MACANDREW.—Question.

Mr. HALL.—Will my honorable friend tell me in what I am going from the question? If he objects to the term "one of the Commissioners," I will say, one of the Committee of Safety—one of the Vigilance Committee appointed by the Opposition, or the leader of the day, if that will please him better. That honorable gentleman said just now, "Let us take the division at once. This is the division on the no-confidence motion." That is all very fine. We have no objection to their taking a division, but let it be understood that it is simply a division as to whether the Triennial Parliaments Bill shall be read a second time or not.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. HALL.—Honorable members may cry "Oh, oh!" but that is all the argument they have got. I will show them why what I say is the fact. This afternoon, when attempting to speak on this question, I proposed to go into arguments bearing upon the question of confidence or no-confidence—arguments of which a great number ought to be heard by this House

before deciding that question. Then you, Sir, stopped me, very properly, and I desisted, and those arguments remain unused by myself and others who wish to address the House on this subject. It is, therefore, too much to ask the House to come to a division to-night upon confidence or no-confidence before the question has been debated. The Opposition, during the short time they have been in opposition, have made many blunders, and have shown some very bad generalship; but I do not think they ever made a greater blunder than when they asked us to take a division on the no-confidence motion upon a question for the adjournment of a debate. They really seem to be afraid.

Mr. BROWN.—Divide.

Mr. HALL.—There is another reason, perhaps, why we should not go to a division to-night. Some honorable gentlemen make such extraordinary noises, that we might fancy they could not now give so clear a vote as they would do if they recorded it at an earlier part of the day. I was about to remark, when interrupted by those extraordinary exclamations, that it is utterly absurd to expect the House to decide a question of confidence or no-confidence without its being debated. Therefore, if there be a division, let it be distinctly understood that it will be a division on the Triennial Parliaments Bill, and nothing else.

Mr. MURRAY.—It is quite possible that this Bill may not become law in consequence of the action of the Opposition, and therefore I shall express my opinions shortly with reference to it without going into any extraneous matter. I am opposed to this Bill, and always have been opposed to it, and I think there is a great deal of buncombe in calling it a liberal measure. Under its provisions you would get raw and inexperienced men into the House, and the first two years would be taken up by them in learning the business, while the third would be spent in talking to the outside public. As a matter of improving the government of the country, it is folly; and, as a means of bringing poor men into the House, it will be a failure. I would much sooner see an annual than a triennial Parliament, but I would be prepared to accept a compromise and make it quadrennial. Under this Triennial Bill you may just as easily have men sitting in this House who do not represent their constituents as under the present system. They may retain the confidence of their constituents for the first year, and may then forfeit it, and yet they can still continue to sit in the House for two years longer. The provision I should like to make would be, that on a constituency losing confidence in its representative a majority of the electors should have the power to apply to you, Sir, by petition, and demand that the seat be declared vacant, and a new writ be issued. By that means no constituency would be misrepresented for more than one year; whereas by your Triennial Parliaments Bill you might for two years have similar misrepresentation to that you have at present. As I am opposed to this Bill, I shall feel it my duty to support the honorable gentlemen opposite in getting rid of it, and shall

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not consider the division as one of confidence or want of confidence in the Government. I am very glad to see those honorable gentlemen playing my game. As other honorable members have been allowed to go outside the ordinary rules of debate on this occasion, I may take the opportunity of saying that there is no member of this House more in favour of liberal measures than I am. I am most strongly in favour of an extension of the franchise, and still more of the important question of the redistribution of seats in this House on a better basis. I shall be glad if this Bill is thrown out, so that a Quadrennial Parliaments Bill may be introduced.

Question put, "That the debate be now adjourned;" upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	...	31
Noes	...	...	...	...	37
Majority against	...	...	...	...	6

AYES.

Mr. Acton Adams,	Mr. Moorhouse,
Major Atkinson,	Mr. Murray,
Mr. Bain,	Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Bowen,	Mr. Ormond,
Mr. Brandon,	Mr. Pitt,
Mr. Bryce,	Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Driver,	Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Gibbs,	Mr. Seymour,
Mr. Hall,	Mr. Stevens,
Mr. H. Hirst,	Mr. Sutton,
Mr. Hursthouse,	Colonel Trimble,
Mr. Johnston,	Major Willie,
Mr. Kelly,	Mr. Wright.
Mr. Levin,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mr. Masters,	Captain Russell,
Mr. McLean,	Mr. Wakefield.

NOES.

Mr. Allwright,	Mr. McCaughan,
Mr. Andrews,	Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Ballance,	Mr. Pyke,
Mr. Barron,	Mr. Reeves,
Mr. Bunny,	Mr. Seddon,
Captain Colbeck,	Mr. Shanks,
Mr. De Lautour,	Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Finn,	Mr. Stewart,
Mr. J. B. Fisher,	Mr. Swanson,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,	Mr. Tainui,
Mr. George,	Mr. Tawhai,
Mr. Gisborne,	Major Te Wheoro,
Mr. Hamlin,	Mr. Thomson,
Major Harris,	Mr. Tole,
Mr. W. J. Hurst,	Mr. Tomoana,
Mr. Hutchison,	Mr. Reader Wood.
Mr. Ireland,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mr. London,	Mr. Moss,
Mr. Macandrew,	Mr. Speight.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mr. Beetham,	Mr. Brown,
Mr. Dick,	Mr. Shrimski,
Mr. Fulton,	Mr. Hislop,
Captain Kenny,	Mr. Shephard,
Mr. Mason,	Dr. Wallis,

Mr. Richmond,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Whitaker,
Mr. Whyte.

Mr. Turnbull,
Sir G. Grey,
Mr. Reid,
Mr. McDonald.

Adjournment of the debate negatived, and previous question carried.

The House adjourned at half-past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1879.

Railway Contracts—Local Bills.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

RAILWAY CONTRACTS.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE, it was ordered, That there be laid upon the table a return showing the probable cost of the various contracts entered into but not yet completed for the construction of railways; and also the probable cost of material ordered in connection therewith.

LOCAL BILLS.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE desired to ask the ruling of the Council with respect to the duties of the Local Bills Committee. Honorable members must be aware that last year a Local Bills Committee was appointed, and, in the opinion of some members of the Council, went outside the Standing Orders with reference to its inquiry into Bills and the amending of Bills. As he was Chairman of the Committee, and as the question had been raised as to how far the Committee might go, he should like the Council to give some directions as to how far the Committee should go.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES thought the honorable member should give notice of motion, so that the whole subject might be brought under the consideration of the Council. The Council could not now enter into a full discussion of the question, considering the manner in which it had been brought up.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL quite concurred with the suggestion made by the honorable gentleman opposite; but he was unable to assent for one moment to the idea that any alteration was required in the Standing Orders. The point was one to which the attention of the Council should be directed as soon as possible. There was this distinction, to which attention had not been drawn: There was a class of Bills which were private Bills, in respect of which the Examiner's certificate was all that was necessary; but the Bills which went before the Local Bills Committee were not private Bills at all. They were Bills such as Waterworks Bills, Municipal Bills, Athenaeum Bills, School Bills, and a great variety of Bills dealing with social objects, attention to which, under the old provincial system, was given by the Provincial Legislatures. Now, these were measures of absolute necessity to the social welfare of the community, and could only

come before Parliament to be dealt with. But it had been the invariable practice in the House of Representatives, with regard to these Bills, whether they involved considerations of public importance or not, to pass them rapidly through on private members' days; and he was sure the Hon. the Speaker would corroborate him when he said that these measures were passed without any sufficient consideration, chiefly because members knew that the Bills would be properly inquired into in the Legislative Council. In this the Local Bills Committee had not only done a signal service, but had stood in the way of jobs and objectionable proposals being carried out, which would have slipped through easily but for the keen watchfulness displayed on these matters by the Local Bills Committee. If, therefore, the Council wanted to make any alteration, it must not be in the way of extending the power given, but of restricting it, as he could not for one moment allow it to be said that the Committee had exceeded its duty in the past. The Committee should not only be allowed, but should be encouraged, to make a searching examination into all local Bills. Unless this was done, the Committee might as well give up the work altogether, and allow many jobs and improper measures to be passed in the Council in the same way as in the House of Representatives. The Hon. the Speaker's attention should be called to this matter, because it would often come before him for decision.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE considered that the country had been under great obligations to the Committee in question, and he had never been one to complain that that body had exceeded its functions. Nevertheless, he thought that the Standing Order under which this Committee was appointed every year might be so amended as to make it clear what was really required of the Committee. The examination of local Bills by this Committee was a very useful and valuable arrangement—an arrangement eminently adapted for facilitating the despatch of public business in a satisfactory manner. He had been told by good authorities that the pains and trouble taken by the Committee in examining these Bills was beyond all praise; but, if it was a fact that the wording of the Standing Order was not sufficient to cover the whole of the ground over which the Committee usually travelled, then he thought it would be advisable that the Standing Orders should be sent to the Standing Orders Committee for the purpose of being amended, for every year there had been certain objections taken by one or two honorable gentlemen, who conceived that the Committee had overstepped its functions. As they did not appear to have much business before them, he thought that to-morrow or next day it would be as well to consider the question of the sufficiency of the Standing Order under which this Committee was appointed. It was a great advantage to the Council and the country, and a relief to the Government, that these Bills should be examined thoroughly, especially at times when they had not got one moment to spare from the rush of ordinary business.

Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell

The Hon. the SPEAKER said it would be as well if notice were given. The Council might express its opinion, and then effect could be given to it by amending the Standing Orders.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE gave notice accordingly.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Readings—Nelson Naval Training School—Helen'sville—Whangarei Railway—County Council Endowments—Geymouth Steam-Tug—Native Land Purchases—Lawrence-Roxburgh Railway—Hore Native Doctor—Stephen's Island Lighthouse—Cab-Hire—Henley River Board—Otago School Buildings—Wellington Orphanage—Cromwell—Wanaka Telegraph—Clyde—Wanaka Railway—Land-Tax—Lower Hawes Block—Justices of the Peace—Kail—Geymouth—Native Reserves—Ohinemuri Outrage—Coasting Trade—Qualification of Electors Bill—Village Settlements Bill—Eden Tolls—Local Manufactures—D. Clinie and J. Gwynneth—Wanganui Endowed Schools Bill—Lyttelton Harbour Board Bill—Auckland Turnpike Bill—Imprisonment for Debt Abolition Bill—Miners Act Amendment Bill—Licensing Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Christchurch Drill-shed Bill, Palmerston-North Reserves Bill, Timaru Waterworks Bill, Otago University Reserves Vesting Bill, West Clive Public Hall Reserve Bill, Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill, Electric Telegraph Bill, Registration of Births Bill, Registration of Dogs Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Oamaru Harbour Board Bill, Oamaru Waterworks Bill, Mining Companies Bill, Masterton and Greytown Lands Management Bill, Bluff Harbour Foreshore Endowment Bill.

NELSON NAVAL TRAINING SCHOOL.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS asked the Minister in charge of the Marine Department, Whether the Government will take into their consideration the desirability of establishing a Naval Training School at Nelson, somewhat similar to that established at Kohimarama? He would point out that the cost of transit from the central and southern portions of the colony would be much cheaper to Nelson than to Auckland, while the cost of food and maintenance of the school generally would, at all events, be very small. The climate of Nelson, and the general state of health in that part of the colony, were favourable to the establishment of such a school. The port, though small, was, he thought, eminently suitable for the training boys were supposed to receive at establishments of this kind.

Major ATKINSON replied that the subject was receiving the consideration of the Government; but he found that at the present time the school in Auckland was not full. No doubt as the colony grew it would be desirable to have

another such school, and, as the honorable gentleman said, Nelson was very well suited for such an establishment. He was informed, however, that the requirements of the colony were not at present such as to render the establishment of a second school necessary. He would make further inquiries on the subject.

HELENSVILLE-WHANGAREI RAILWAY.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Minister for Public Works, If a survey of the country between Helensville and Whangarei is now being made for the purpose of ascertaining the best route for a railway between those two places; if so, when the survey is likely to be completed, and if it is the intention of the Government to place a sum of money on the estimates for the purpose of constructing the said railway?

Mr. OLIVER replied that the survey of this line had been ordered, and would be finished probably during the ensuing summer. A sum would be placed on the estimates for the purpose.

COUNTY COUNCIL ENDOWMENTS.

Mr. SHANKS asked the Government, If they will be prepared to introduce a Bill to grant endowments to County Councils, similar to those which have been already allocated to Municipalities?

Mr. HALL replied that this was a broad question of policy, on which the Government were not at the present time prepared to give an answer. They would take up this question and other questions of policy when the Financial Statement was submitted.

GREYMOUTH STEAM-TUG.

Mr. REEVES asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will cause to be placed on the estimates a sum of money for the purpose of subsidizing a tug-boat for the Harbour of Greymouth, in order to facilitate the export of coal from that port? He might suggest that the subsidizing of a steam-tug in connection with Greymouth would facilitate the export of coal from that place and other fields in the neighbourhood.

Mr. OLIVER replied that the question of the best means of developing the coal fields on the west coast of the Middle Island was now occupying the attention of the Government, and the question of subsidizing a tug was also being considered in connection with the subject.

NATIVE LAND PURCHASES.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Native Minister, Whether the amounts required to complete Native land purchases, mentioned in his Statement as £1,121,000, are to be considered as a responsibility for which provision in full will have to be made? Also, whether any further liabilities are now being incurred in respect of Native land purchases?

Mr. BRYCE replied that, with respect to the first part of the question, there was no doubt that agreements had been made, for which the Government was responsible, to complete those land-purchase transactions. So far the responsi-

bility on the part of the Government appeared to be complete. Many of those purchases could possibly, by arrangement, be abandoned, if the House thought such a course advisable. He would point out, however, that the cases in which the abandonment was possible would probably be cases in which it would not be desirable to abandon the purchases. That was to say, where the Government had made a good bargain the purchase might be abandoned; but where they had made a bad bargain probably the Natives would hold the Government fully responsible for payment of the amount agreed upon. Practically he would say that full responsibility for the amount rested upon the colony. With respect to the second part of the question, some little time ago instructions were pretty generally given to the agents for the purchase of Native lands to prosecute their operations with vigour. Those instructions were good yet, and negotiations were probably in full progress, but no actual liabilities could be placed upon the colony without the knowledge of Government. That was to say, the agents could not give the Natives an amount of money to secure future purchases without the knowledge and consent of the Government; so that he could say, although these negotiations were going on, further liabilities had not been actually incurred.

LAWRENCE-ROXBURGH RAILWAY.

Mr. IRELAND asked the Government, If, in the event of the five-million loan being obtained, they will cause a survey of a railway line from Lawrence to Ettrick and Roxburgh to be made?

Mr. OLIVER might state that if, after inquiry, the line indicated was found to be worth the trouble of survey, the Government would have no objection whatever to cause the survey to be made.

HOIERE NATIVES' DOCTOR.

Mr. TAINUI asked the Native Minister, If the Government will appoint a doctor to attend to the Natives of Hoiere? He might explain that there was already a doctor there, who was only paid £10 a year to attend to the Natives. This he considered was not sufficient, and he had received an application from thirty-two persons living in the district, asking him to see about the appointment, and the payment of a proper salary—say, £50 per annum. He might also state that Mr. Mackay had heard, when he was in the district, that the doctor could not attend to the Natives, because his salary was too small, and that after ten years' services he had not received an increase. That was why the Natives were so very anxious in their request that the matter should be attended to, and a doctor appointed, making it worth his time to attend to their wants.

Mr. BRYCE replied he had directed inquiries to be made into this matter, both as to the necessities of the Natives and as to the medical attendance available. He was not himself aware of the particulars which the honorable gentleman had given; but he had directed inquiries to be made, and he would be in a position, when he received the results of these inquiries, to give the

honorable gentleman whatever information on the subject he required.

STEPHEN'S ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE.

Mr. RICHMOND asked the Government, Whether any steps have been taken since June last to ascertain if a site for a lighthouse can be found on Stephen's Island; and, if a site cannot be found, whether they intend to erect a lighthouse on the Island of Kapiti, and when the work will be commenced? In asking the question, he had only to state that there had been frequent wrecks on the Waitaki Beach, nearly opposite to the Island of Kapiti, in consequence of ships endeavouring to make Cook Strait in stormy and thick weather. A winter or two ago there were several large vessels lost, one being an immigrant ship, but fortunately without loss of life. So frequently were these wrecks occurring that the authorities saw at once the necessity of erecting a lighthouse on the Island of Kapiti, or on Stephen's Island, which would be a more preferable site, owing to its prominent position. Mr. Blackett, the Marine Engineer, reported in June last that he had visited Stephen's Island twice, and had sent men to make a road to its top. Since then, notwithstanding the importance of the matter, and the great boon it would be to the shipping, nothing appeared to have been done. He hoped to hear from the Government that some steps were being taken to erect this light, which was so much needed.

Major ATKINSON said the question was one of considerable importance. He was sorry to say the Marine Engineer was too busy to visit Stephen's Island at present, but he would do so at the earliest opportunity, and then it would be decided whether the lighthouse should be erected on Stephen's Island or on the Island of Kapiti. When a decision was arrived at, the Government would lose no time in having a lighthouse erected.

CAB-HIRE.

Mr. SUTTON asked the Government, Whether a sum of £240 or thereabouts has been charged against the Government for cab-hire in Wellington; if so, by whom was it expended, and out of what vote was it paid? It had been currently reported in the lobbies, and he thought it had also been stated in the Wellington papers, that such a sum had been paid for cab-hire for some Ministers of the Crown, and he was anxious to know whether the information was correct. He thought it was an unusual thing for vouchers to be sent in by Ministers for cab-hire, which they ought to pay themselves.

Mr. HALL was not able to give a complete answer to the honorable gentleman. Since the last sitting of the House, he had not had time to obtain the full particulars. He had got some of them, and would give a more complete answer on a future occasion. He had a return of the amounts paid for cab-hire from the 1st July, 1878, to the 30th September, 1879. The items were,—Sir George Grey, 16s.; Mr. Sheehan, £219 11s. 6d.; Colonel Whitmore, £2. Since the 30th September, an account had been sent in for cab-hire from the 4th October to the 1st Novem-

Mr. Bryce

ber for Mr. Sheehan, amounting to £84 1s. 5d. A question had arisen whether part of that sum was not to be charged to Mr. Sheehan's private account; £20, however, had been paid out of imprest money in the hands of the Native Office, which had not yet been brought to account. There had also been received vouchers from Mr. Sheehan's private secretary for £14 8s., £5 8s. 6d., and £11 18s. These items had not yet been paid. He would endeavour by next sitting-day to make the answer more complete.

Sir G. GREY wished to make a personal explanation upon the answer given by the Premier. He had reason to believe that part of the cab-hire which he stated had been paid was positively disallowed by the late Government in Cabinet, and was not allowed to be paid at all. Answers of the kind given ought not to be made until after inquiry.

Mr. HALL did not think that observation was deserved. He would read the account of sums actually paid that had been furnished officially, which would show that he had not exaggerated the matter in any way:—

"Return showing the amount paid for cab-hire for Ministers individually from 1st July to 30th September, 1879—Hon. Sir G. Grey, 16s.; Hon. J. Sheehan, £219 11s. 6d.; Hon. Colonel Whitmore, £2: total, £222 7s. 6d. Note: The above does not include payments which may have been made out of imprest moneys not yet brought to charge in the Treasury books.—J. B. HEYWOOD, Accountant to the Treasury. Treasury, 22nd October, 1879."

The best thing that he could now do was to move, That this paper be laid on the table; and he would accordingly do so.

Motion agreed to.

HENLEY RIVER BOARD.

Mr. FULTON asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he has received a letter from the Chairman of the Henley River Board, of date 22nd September; what answer he has sent; and what steps he proposes to take for securing the railway against destructive floods? He might mention that in consequence of serious floods in the Taieri River considerable damage had been done, not only to the adjacent land, but also to the railway. He should be glad, therefore, to know that the Government were doing something in the matter.

Mr. OLIVER replied that a letter had been received by the Government from the Henley River Board. The Government had sent a reply to the effect that they would recommend the issue of a Commission to three professional gentlemen to prepare a proper report on the whole question.

OTAGO SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

Mr. FULTON asked the Minister of Education, Whether, in his opinion, the sum of £2,500, apportioned to the Otago Education District out of the £25,000 voted for school buildings in the colony, is a fair adjustment, considering the population and school attendance in that district; and, if not, whether he will be prepared to

place a sum on the estimates to make that adjustment more equitable?

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that, of the sum appropriated last year for school buildings, all except £25,000 had been distributed with a preponderating regard to population and school attendance. The £25,000 was distributed with regard to the special requirements of the several districts. He might state that the Government would bring down proposals in reference to education in which a fair regard would be had in the main to population and school attendance. The Government at the same time fully recognized that in a national system of education it would not be right that one part of the country should be fully equipped with school buildings and appliances, and another part of the country left in a state of starvation. They would bring down proposals to adjust the inequalities which existed in the past, and prevent one part of the colony labouring under a disadvantage with respect to education as compared with another part of the colony.

WELLINGTON ORPHANAGE.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked the Government, If they will place on the estimates a sum of money as a grant-in-aid to a sum already accumulated for the building of an orphanage in the City of Wellington? He might state, by way of preface to this question, that there was already a site obtained for the building. A sum of £1,000 had also been accumulated, which might be applied towards the erection of a building, or towards maintaining the establishment. He desired to know whether the Government would be inclined to supplement the £1,000 by another £1,000 towards the building of an orphanage.

Mr. HALL said the Government would prefer postponing a definite answer to this question until they had submitted their policy in reference to the general question of the maintenance of charitable institutions.

CROMWELL-WANAKA TELEGRAPH.

Mr. PYKE asked the Premier, When the Government intend to commence and proceed with the construction of the Cromwell-Wanaka telegraph line?

Mr. HALL replied that a sum of £2,000 had been placed on the proposed estimates for this year for the extension of this telegraph line.

CLYDE-WANAKA RAILWAY.

Mr. PYKE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether instructions have been issued for the immediate prosecution of the survey of the Clyde-Wanaka portion of the Otago Central Railway; and, if so, at what date such instructions were issued? He asked this question simply because the non-prosecution of the survey was blocking up the whole of the land in the locality from sale and occupation, and at the same time obstructing the public works of the county.

Mr. OLIVER would be obliged to the honorable member if he would ask this question again in the course of a few days, when Mr. Blair had resumed his duties.

LAND-TAX.

Mr. ANDREWS asked the Government, Whether land set aside by religious bodies or by private individuals for educational purposes comes under clause 5, subsections (5) and (6), of "The Land-Tax Act, 1878"?

Mr. HALL replied that it was held that, if the school for which the land was set aside was, or might become, subject to inspection by an Inspector under the Education Act, the tenant was liable as owner. If the school was not open to such inspection, then the trust was liable.

Mr. ANDREWS said perhaps he had not made his question plain, but the answer was not the one he required. The land to which he referred was land which had been reserved for educational purposes, but which had been leased to private persons and others, and not used for schools. His question was entirely independent of schools.

Mr. HALL remarked that if the land was reserved for educational purposes it must be for the benefit of schools.

Mr. ANDREWS said the land was being used now for pasturage and other purposes. Private persons had built on education reserves, and in such cases the question arose as to who was responsible for the land-tax.

Mr. HALL took it that the proper interpretation of the answer he had given was, that that depended on the character of the school or educational establishment for the endowment of which the lands had been set apart. If it was a school subject to public inspection, then it was considered a public school, and the tenant would have to pay the tax. If, on the other hand, it was a school which was not subject to public inspection, then it was in the nature of a private school, and the owner of the land had to pay the tax.

LOWER HAWEA BLOCK.

Mr. PYKE asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government will cause the Proclamation of the sale of the Lower Hawea Block, under the deferred-payment system, as advertised for the 6th November, to be cancelled, and will reproclaim the sale of the land in the said block under the agricultural-lease system, as desired by intending settlers?

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that, as he was advised, it was very doubtful whether the Government, having issued this Proclamation, had power to cancel it in favour of a different kind of Proclamation, and up to the present time he had not had sufficient reason to lead him to think that the decision came to by the late Government should be reconsidered.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Government, If there is any regulation providing for the revision of the list of Justices of the Peace, and also against bankrupts continuing to sit on the bench or act as Justices of the Peace? He was aware that there was a great necessity for some change in the system of appointing Justices of the Peace. He had been urged to bring this matter before the Government from the anomaly of men who

themselves in some cases were qualified to be in the position of culprits, instead of that of Judges, sitting on the bench. He hoped the Government would be able to give an answer to this question, and that, if it were found that there was no provision made for purging the roll, it should be done by law in future.

Mr. ROLLESTON said there was at present no regulation for the revision of the list of Justices of the Peace. So far as he was aware, a fresh Commission was issued from time to time—he thought generally about once in the year. He quite agreed with the honorable member that this was a matter which deserved very much fuller consideration than had hitherto been given to it: the list of Justices was becoming a very lengthy one, and the particular question the honorable gentleman had brought up regarding the Justices of the Peace was assuming a magnitude that would make it necessary to arrive at some rule of procedure with regard to it.

RAILS.

Mr. MURRAY asked the Minister for Public Works, If there has been any response to the advertisements calling for the manufacture of steel rails in New Zealand; and, if so, will he have any objection to lay any papers in connection therewith before the House? Also, if he will state what rails have been procured during the year 1878, and to date, and at what prices, and on what terms? Also, what quantity and classes of rails are available for future use? Honorable members would be aware that an advertisement of a somewhat lengthy character had appeared in the papers of the colony and of Great Britain, calling for tenders for a large quantity of rails. He wished to know from the Government what had been the result of that advertisement, which he believed had been published at a considerable cost to the colony. He also wished to know what rails were in stock at the present time. The price of iron had been unprecedentedly low; and he desired to know whether the Government had taken advantage of that circumstance to lay in a large stock of rails for the construction of the colonial railways.

Mr. OLIVER, in reply, said that tenders were invited for the manufacture of steel rails in the colony, to be sent in before the 30th September last, but that none were received. On the 27th of July some papers relating to the manufacture of steel rails in the colony were laid on the table of the House. These papers contained some very interesting letters from certain manufacturers in Great Britain; but, so far, the correspondence had led to no result whatever. With regard to the production of a return showing the quantity, description, and prices of rails, he had ordered a return to be prepared of the quantity of rails on hand, and it would be laid on the table as soon as possible.

GREYMOUTH NATIVE RESERVE.

Mr. MASTERS asked the Minister for Native Affairs, What steps the Government intend to take in respect to the Commission that was held at Greymouth in February last, before Mr. Com-

missioner Young, for the purpose of determining the individual interests of the Natives in the Greymouth Native Reserve; and whether the Government will make a full and exhaustive inquiry into the claims for consideration of the European tenants occupying the land as to right of renewal, &c., before in any way entertaining the question of issuing Crown titles to the Natives?

Mr. BRYCE replied that the reserves to which this question referred were by no means in a simple legal position. An inquiry was made into the matter in February last by Mr. Commissioner Young, whose report had been referred to the Law Officers of the Crown. The late Government had directed that a Bill should be prepared to give effect to the report with regard to individualizing the title to these reserves. That Bill was not yet prepared, and had not been seen by the present Government. He might say that he was pretty well acquainted with this matter, owing to his having been Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee in 1875, when it was inquired into. He remembered that at that time Mr. Alexander Mackay gave evidence before the Committee to the effect that the people holding the leases of these reserves had an undoubted claim to have the leases renewed. That was the substance of the report of the Committee, in which he (Mr. Bryce) entirely concurred. With respect to there being any danger of the grant being issued without due inquiry, he could assure the honorable gentleman that that was quite impossible, because, as he was advised, the matter could not be dealt with except by legislation of the Assembly. The honorable gentleman would therefore have full opportunity of preferring the equitable claims of the Europeans who held these leases to a renewal. He might mention that the return which was asked for by the honorable member for the Southern Maori District was now ready. It was a report by Mr. Commissioner Young on the Native reserves on the west coast of the Middle Island, together with the minutes of evidence; and he took this opportunity of laying the return on the table. He might observe, however, that one portion of the return asked for was intentionally omitted from the papers. The honorable gentleman asked for minutes upon the correspondence, and he did not think it was proper to give the whole of the Ministerial and official minutes upon the correspondence. With that exception the return was complete.

OHINEMURI OUTRAGE.

Mr. SUTTON asked the Government, — (1) Whether the outrage at Ohinemuri was not traceable to some dispute about the alleged sale of the land; (2) what was the date of the so-called sale by the Government; and (3) by whom was the arrangement made? He had been induced to put this question on the Paper because some doubt seemed to exist as to the exact state of the title to this land, and the circumstances under which it became to some extent the property of the Crown.

Mr. BRYCE thought there was very little doubt that this outrage was traceable to some dispute about the title to the land, and, in fact,

Mr. Murray

that nearly all the Maori outrages and troubles were traceable to the same cause. He might say, with respect to this particular block of land, that the negotiations for its purchase by the Government were entered into for the first time in March last. They were entered into with a hapu which was supposed at the time to have the sole and complete right to the land; and the survey in connection with which the outrage occurred was for the purpose of enabling the land to go before the Native Land Court for the ascertainment of title. The hapu by which the outrage was committed had been, he believed, dissatisfied with some previous decisions of the Native Land Court in respect to other blocks; and, from their point of view, it might probably be urged that they thought they would perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied with the decision of the Court with reference to this block. The block of land—about 1,500 acres—was supposed to belong to a particular hapu. The purchase was arranged for at 5s. an acre, and certain payments were made. The survey was then proceeding with a view to the title to the land being inquired into by the Native Land Court, when the outrage was committed. With regard to the second part of the question, he had already explained that, so far as it could be called a purchase, it was made in last March, when about £114 was paid out of the total amount. He might mention that the purchase was negotiated by Mr. Puckey and Mr. Wilkinson, of the Thames, and he held in his hand two extracts from the reports of these gentlemen, which he would read. The following was Mr. E. W. Puckey's report:—

"In the beginning of March last certain members of the Ngatikoi Hapu resident at Ohinemuri came to the Thames and offered the Pukehange Block for sale to the Government. The land-purchase officers declined to make any payment unless they were assured that the rest of the owners concurred in the proposed sale. The Natives referred to then went back, returning in a few days to the Thames, accompanied by one or two more, with a note from the rest of the Ngatikoi Hapu agreeing to the proposed sale, though objecting to the price. Upon receiving an assurance that there would be no difficulty about the matter, a deposit was paid, all arrangements being at the same time made for surveying the land and passing it through the Native Land Court in the usual manner. The price agreed to was 5s. per acre, the cost of the survey being borne by the Government."

Mr. Wilkinson, in his report of the 1st May, said,—

"This is a new purchase that Mr. Puckey and myself have commenced since my last report. The land is of fair quality, and, being near to Ohinemuri, will, I think, be an advisable purchase. It has not yet passed the Native Land Court."

COASTING TRADE.

Mr. W. J. HURST asked the Government, If they are prepared to advise His Excellency the Governor, in virtue of clauses 6 and 7 of "The Coasting Trade Act, 1871," to impose similar

restrictions upon foreign shipping to those in existence prior to the passing of that Act?

Major ATKINSON said the reply was rather of an elaborate and technical character, and he would, with permission of the House, read it:—
"Hon. Commissioner of Customs.

"The Coasting Trade Regulation Act, 1871,' extends to foreign vessels the privilege of engaging in the coasting trade of New Zealand; but it authorizes the Governor in Council to restrict the privileges of foreign ships and impose additional duties upon them in cases where British vessels are subject in any foreign country to restrictions as to the voyages in which they may engage or the goods they may carry. The Crown Law Officers advise that, the Act quoted above being subject to the provisions of the Imperial 'Merchant Shipping (Colonial) Act, 1869,' the colony is obliged to respect treaty obligations entered into by Her Majesty with any foreign State so long as they subsist, and that, before an Order in Council could be made prohibiting vessels of foreign countries from engaging in the coasting trade, it would be necessary to ascertain definitely whether any existing treaty secures to the vessels of foreign countries any privileges in respect of the coasting trade of New Zealand.

"With a view of ascertaining the extent to which foreign vessels are competing with British vessels in the coasting trade of the colony, inquiries on the subject have been addressed to the Collectors of Customs throughout the colony, and it was found that, during the year ended on the 30th of June last, three American vessels made one trip each, and one French vessel four trips, timber-laden; one American and one French vessel, one trip each with railway iron; and seven American vessels and one French left the ports at which they first arrived for other ports, carrying parts of their original cargoes, but not local freight or produce. A return giving particulars of these vessels will be prepared and laid on the table of the House.

"W. SEED."

Mr. W. J. HURST thought the honorable gentleman failed to some extent to apprehend the nature of the question. By clauses 5 and 6 of the Act referred to, power was given to the Government to impose restrictions on foreign vessels. These restrictions applied particularly to the case of the large American steamers which, after calling at Auckland, went down the coast to Otago. The honorable gentleman was no doubt aware that the Act of 1871 simply anticipated the Imperial Ordinance which expired in 1872. These restrictions were in force in America, and he thought the Government might reimpose them here if it was found necessary. It was an important question, as many large foreign vessels were arriving in the colony from time to time, discharging part of their cargo in one port, and then proceeding with the remainder to other ports, thereby interfering with the trade of the regular coasting vessels.

Major ATKINSON quite understood the position of the matter, but did not altogether see what the honorable gentleman desired to arrive at. Did he wish the Government to say defi-

nately that they were prepared to exclude foreign vessels from the coasting trade?

Mr. W. J. HURST.—I do not.

Major ATKINSON could not then understand what the honorable gentleman wanted. If he would inform the Government what vessels he wished excluded, the Government would give the matter their consideration. At present the colony was subject to the Imperial Act, and could not impose restrictions upon the vessels of any nation with which the Imperial Government might have a treaty. If the honorable gentleman wished the Government to restrict any particular class of vessels, or all vessels, the question would have to be carefully considered and properly discussed in the House. He would be happy to confer with the honorable gentleman on the subject.

QUALIFICATION OF ELECTORS BILL.

INTERRUPTED DEBATE.

Mr. HALL moved, That the debate upon the motion for leave to introduce this Bill be postponed till next day. The Government had not yet decided what course they should adopt with regard to this and the other Electoral Bills which were in the same position; and if the House would agree to the postponement, he would next day state, for the information of the leader of the Opposition, what course they would be prepared to adopt with regard to his no-confidence motion.

Motion agreed to.

VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS BILL.

Mr. ROLLESTON, in moving the discharge of the order for leave to introduce this Bill, said the Government proposed to introduce provisions for the establishment of village settlements into the amended Land Bill which was now before the House. There was a Bill in the hands of honorable members which would provide for deferred payments to some extent; but the Government was of opinion that further facilities should be afforded for the accomplishment of that object. They wished particularly to make provisions which would enable associations of working-men and others to avail themselves of the special-settlement system. The Government thought it would be more convenient to put these clauses into the amended Land Act, so that the whole of the provisions relative to special settlements and deferred payments might be found in one Act.

Order discharged.

EDEN TOLLS.

Mr. HAMLIN, in moving the motion standing in his name, said his reason for doing so was to supplement the return already received by the County Council of Eden. He also wished to be fully informed himself on this subject before he proceeded further with a Bill of which he had given notice, and the second reading of which was set down for next day. He wanted to know how the money raised by these tolls was expended. At present the expenditure was considered to be made in a very unsatisfactory and antiquated way, as the money was simply ex-

Major Atkinson

pendent upon the people who kept the toll-gates, and not upon keeping the roads in repair.

Motion made, and question put, "That there be laid before this House a return showing the amount of tolls received at the several toll-bars in the Eden County for each year since the abolition of the Province of Auckland; the amount of tolls expended each year on the Great South Road, and on the road from Auckland to Onehunga, respectively; in the latter case, distinguishing the amount expended on the road up to the boundary of the Town of Onehunga, and the amount expended on the two miles of the main road running through that borough to the Onehunga Wharf."—(*Mr. Hamlin*)

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL MANUFACTURES.

Mr. STEVENS, in moving the motion standing in his name, said it was one which he thought would result in doing some good, at all events in the way of supplying information to the public. He therefore trusted the House would permit him to have the Committee for which he was about to move. He was anxious not to spoil the chances of other honorable members getting to their motions, and therefore would not make any lengthened remarks. He was very strongly of opinion that, wherever aid could be given to the manufacturers of colonial products by letting them have those articles which were necessary in their manufactures free of Customs duties, great good would be done. Although, of course, the financial question would come in, and it would rest with the Government of the day to say whether they could propose reductions of the kind he now indicated, still he thought such a Committee as this would do good service in the way of recommending reductions, and also of laying before the House the possibilities that existed for making such reductions. For instance, he was aware that in the boot-manufacturing industry, which was a growing and important one in the colony, reductions could be made in the duties on some of the articles used with great advantage to the manufacturer. He was aware that in several other instances similar relief could be afforded, and he thought it would be politic to afford it. He had endeavoured to have on the Committee representatives from all portions of the colony, especially from large centres of population, and he did not think there was any reason to expect that the Committee would fail to give the House important information on the subject of this motion.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed, to consider and report on the question of what relief can be afforded to manufacturers in this colony by lessening or abolishing duties at present levied on articles used by them in their respective manufactures. Such Committee to consist of Mr. Oliver, Mr. Acton Adams, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Ballance, Mr. Dick, Mr. W. J. Hurst, Mr. Levin, Mr. Moss, Mr. Wright, and the mover. To have power to call for persons and papers, and report in three weeks; five to be a quorum."—(*Mr. Stevens*.)

Mr. W. J. HURST said there could be no

doubt that the motion proposed by the honorable member for Christchurch City touched upon a very important subject, and he regretted that he had not known it occupied so high a position on the Order Paper for that day, because, had he known it, he should have come prepared to speak at much greater length on the matter than he could now do. Honorable members would observe that he had a notice of motion very similar in its terms, but proposing to deal with the matter in a different way. He had given notice of that motion almost on the first day of the session, but, owing to a process "which no fellow could understand," it had got very low down on the Paper, and the honorable member for Christchurch City stood somewhat in the position of having jumped his claim. In each case the object was the same, but they differed as to the steps which should be taken, and perhaps he (Mr. Hurst) might be allowed to state reasons why he thought his own proposition would have been preferable. He had proposed to move, "That, in the opinion of this House, His Excellency the Governor should be moved to issue a Commission to take evidence at the principal commercial centres of New Zealand, and to report upon the operation of the present tariff, with a view to such a readjustment of the Customs duties as may be considered best calculated to foster the various branches of industry now established within the colony." The honorable member (Mr. Stevens) proposed the appointment of a Select Committee to go into this question. Now, he knew what Select Committees were, and was not hopeful as to the result. They had not the time at their disposal to enable them to go into the question fully, and, moreover, it would cost an immense sum of money to summon people to Wellington to give that information which alone would justify action on the part of the Government. He contended that a Commission appointed by the Government, consisting of two or three representatives from each part of the colony—such gentlemen to be either members of the House or else persons who had an earnest desire to encourage local industries, and who were in a position, from their avocations, to give intelligent consideration to the matter—would be better able to go into the whole subject, and bring down some recommendation to the Government. This was a totally different matter from protection and free-trade, and he hoped that if in the course of his remarks he were to use the term "protection" it would be understood he did not apply it in the sense in which it was applied at Home. Any one who had been engaged in commercial pursuits, and had had experience of the tariff of the colony, could not but have come to the conclusion that the duties at present in operation had been imposed at the instance of gentlemen who had not the slightest regard to the encouragement of local industries. He would give one or two instances to show the absurdity of the present tariff. A person desired to import that very useful farming implement known as the plough, and he could import it free of duty; but if a manufacturer in the colony desired to make a plough he had to pay a duty of 10

per cent. on some of the materials employed. They had some excellent plough-manufacturers in Auckland, but the demand had not yet reached such a pitch as to justify manufacturers in going to the expense necessary to manufacture some parts of the plough. For instance, they had to make arrangements with the Home manufacturers to supply them with mould-boards of the peculiar construction and design desired; and on these mould-boards a duty of 10 per cent. had to be paid. Thus the local industry was actually labouring under a disadvantage, as compared with the importation, just as in the case of the boot trade of which the honorable member had spoken. So in the case of steam-engines. A steam-engine was brought in duty-free; but if a local manufacturer were to import taps, or such *et-ceteras*, he had to pay a duty of 10 per cent. The same observation applied to other local industries; and great relief might be given to those industries, and hardships removed, without at all imposing protective duties. But there were a number of manufactured articles which paid the small duty of 10 per cent., but upon which a small additional duty might be placed with advantage. There was, for instance, the case of carriages. It was a notorious fact that the carriage-makers had been greatly injured by importations. That industry had been gradually growing up, and increasing in importance, till it had assumed a very respectable position. In the constituency which he had the honor of representing there were three large factories. In the early period of their existence, perhaps three or four buggies would be sold in a year; but things had now altered, and there would be a large demand were it not for American importations. It was impossible that an English vessel could go from one American port to another; but in this colony it was different. An American vessel could not get sufficient cargo for one port to pay her to make the trip; therefore she brought cargo for all ports. On arrival in Wellington, say, she would discharge her cargo for that port, and then proceed to other ports. In these ships were brought a large number of buggies; and the result was that, in consequence of there being an apparent advance in the price of the home-made article as compared with the importation, the local industry suffered from great depression. He said "apparent advance in the price," because, if the respective qualities of the two articles were taken into consideration, the advantage was really on the side of the local article, as it was much better made and much more durable, if less pleasing to the eye, than the American-made, which the purchaser generally found unsuited to carry out the objects he had in view. However, the effect of this importation was to create great depression, and to deprive a large number of persons of employment. He could go on *ad infinitum* with regard to this matter, but he was not prepared to deal with the question at length just then. On the whole, he did not think the motion of the honorable gentleman was so well calculated to attain the object each of them had in view as the motion he (Mr. Hurst) wanted to propose. He thought the Government ought to appoint

a Commission, consisting of gentlemen of large experience in trade, but free from the charge of being interested in importations, to go through the colony and discover what was the real condition of things. If they went to Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, and perhaps Nelson, if there were any manufactures there, they would be able to collect a mass of valuable information bearing on the subject, and could come down with some definite recommendation as to what should be done to encourage local industries. It was really a very large question. A great deal had been said about depression in Ireland and other old countries, and about the cause of it, but in his opinion such depression would be less severely felt if manufactures in the towns of the Old Country were more varied in their character. Take the case of Glasgow. No town in the Old Country had more rapidly increased than that town; for, whatever depression might be felt in one particular line of industry, there were other industries of a different character flourishing that enabled the city to tide over its difficulties. Manchester and Liverpool were more important centres of manufacture, perhaps; but each of them depended almost entirely upon one industry, and, if unforeseen circumstances arose to cause depression in those industries, the result was disastrous to the people of those towns. In Glasgow there was the shipbuilding industry, also cotton manufacture, and machinery manufacture; and if depression arose in one branch of trade other branches might be in a good position, and so keep up the prosperity of the town. But take Manchester, and deprive it of its cotton trade, and then one finds the whole town is thrown into a condition of the greatest distress. No doubt the manufacture of machinery was carried on, but to a limited extent. In the case of New Zealand, of course, everything depended, in a great many districts—agricultural districts—upon circumstances over which the people had no control. If a failure in the harvest occurred there must be distress, though our towns were large in proportion to the population of the country. He believed the House would never employ its time better than when it came to consider this matter; and he should very much like to see the idea of Sir Julius Vogel, shadowed forth in Auckland, discussed, that endeavours should be made to see what parts of the country would be specially suitable to particular manufactures, and, having discovered that, that all be done that could be done to encourage the establishment of such industries; because the day was fast advancing when, if some industrial occupations were not found for the youth of the colony, the youth would seek places where their labour would be better appreciated. The tendency of the youth of the colony was to educate themselves to an extent which unfitted them for some of these employments, and, if our future financial state would allow, we should institute colleges of a practical description, like those which had been initiated in America, such as agricultural schools, whereby education of a very valuable character would be afforded. He apprehended that no honorable gentleman who knew anything

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about agriculture would deny that the time was fast approaching when an agriculturist, if he would be successful, must be something of an agricultural chemist. It was necessary that their youth should address themselves to those matters if they were to keep in the front rank in the race of nations. He trusted the honorable member for Christchurch City would permit the few observations he had made to lead him to see the question as he (Mr. W. J. Hurst) saw it. He had carefully drafted his motion so that free-traders and protectionists could join in securing a revision of the tariff. If the honorable member pressed his motion, he would go with him; but he did not think the same benefits would result from this motion as from the motion of which he had himself given notice. However, if the end were attained, he would be quite satisfied. He was sorry he did not know the motion was coming on, as he might have been better prepared to speak upon the subject. However, there was no necessity to adduce reasons for the motion, because it spoke for itself. He was sure every right-thinking man would agree to that. Hitherto they had had very few commercial men on the Government benches. Sir Julius Vogel was the gentleman who revised the present tariff. He thought they should now go a step further, and let some articles go free, while they revised the duties imposed on others. Of course they must derive a certain amount of money from the Customs for revenue purposes: free-trader and protectionist alike must admit that. Surely, therefore, they should raise that revenue by duties imposed upon articles which were likely to be produced here with advantage to the colony and to the rising generation.

Mr. LEVIN had followed the remarks of the honorable member for Auckland City West with a great deal of attention, and, in reference to the views he had given utterance to, he confessed his own leaning was much in the direction that honorable gentleman took. At the same time, he thought that what they saw going on around them in the colony at the present time showed very clearly the need for more immediate action and prompt result than the course proposed by the honorable member for Auckland City West. He believed that both the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City and that of the honorable member for Auckland City West could very properly be given effect to by the House. The motion now before them would be very valuable in assisting the Commissioners, if appointed, to arrive much more speedily at a result, by saving them from going over a great deal of detail-work, which could be done by the Committee now proposed by the honorable member for Christchurch City. But the duties of the Committee proposed by the honorable member for Christchurch City might be more fully stated without giving them very much more to do; while, at the same time, it would have the result of bringing to the House very much more information. He would ask the honorable member for Christchurch City if he would have any objection to add, after the word "manufactures," the following words: "and any other means by

which the establishment of colonial industries and manufactures may be promoted." He would not trouble honorable members with any further remarks, because he believed that the whole House was unanimous in a desire to foster and encourage those local industries which, after all, were the bulwarks of our national greatness.

Mr. PITT was glad to hear the speech of the honorable member who had just sat down. Until the honorable member spoke he was in doubt as to which was the better motion to support—the one now before the House, or that of which the honorable member for Auckland City West had given notice. He attached particular weight to the opinions expressed by the honorable member for Wellington City, occupying as he did an important commercial position in this city, and being Chairman of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce. Therefore he had made up his mind to vote for the motion at present before the House. He was very glad that, so far, no opposition had been raised to this motion, and he hoped none would be raised. Very important results would, he thought, accrue from the appointment of this Committee. In the part of the colony which he represented a new industry was about to be established, the success or failure of which would largely depend upon whether or not they would be able to obtain the remission of duties on articles to be used in the manufacture of that company. He referred to the Nelson Jam Company. It was very well known that the duty on the sugar which would be used in that manufacture made all the difference between whether that article could be manufactured in the colony at a profit or a loss, and whether or not it could be manufactured so as to compete with the Tasmanian article. The honorable member for Auckland City West, in speaking of the various cities which the proposed Commission should visit, mentioned Christchurch, Dunedin, &c., and added "Nelson, if they have any manufactures there." He might inform the honorable gentleman that at one time Nelson used to import all her steam-engines from Auckland, but now she not only manufactured her own steam-engines, but also built steamers to carry them. They also manufactured hematite paint; they had two iron-foundries, which did a considerable amount of work, not only for Nelson, but for other parts of the colony. The first woollen factory in the colony was started at Nelson, and colonial wines were also extensively made there. However, on this occasion he wished to speak, not from a local, but from a colonial point of view, and he was sure this Committee would supply information to the House on which they would be able ultimately to act, and induce the Government to give effect to the report of the Committee in such a way as to conduce very much to the benefit of the manufactures of the colony.

Mr. SPEIGHT thought the motion of the honorable member for Bruce was better than the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City. The motion of the honorable member for Bruce was as follows:—

"That a Committee be appointed to consider and report as to how, in their opinion, industrial

occupations may be successfully established in New Zealand, and the productive resources of the colony developed."

He apprehended that that covered the whole subject. It took in the questions of Customs duties, bonuses to industries, and every phase of the colonial-industry question. The House would do well to adopt the motion of the honorable member for Bruce, and also the motion of the honorable member for Auckland City West. With the honorable member for Wellington City he quite agreed. They would do wrong to simply appoint a Commission. Before a Commission was appointed they should have a Committee, and let that Committee bring up to the House a report stating what should be the duties of the Commission. The sooner the whole subject was settled the better it would be for the colony. To those who had not been members of the House, but who had watched its proceedings, it was manifest that the whole subject of the development of local industries had not received that attention which it ought to have received in years past. Much more attention had been paid to the floating of loans and their expenditure upon public works than to the raising of money by means of industries within the colony. Now that this matter had been brought so prominently before the House by means of resolutions, and was also engaging the attention of the country in so very distinct a manner, it was well that they should promptly settle it at once. He thought the proposition of the honorable member for Bruce should be settled first, and that that Committee should bring up recommendations embodying the idea of the appointment of a Commission. If that were done he believed it would be well done. There were a few matters in connection with this subject which required attention. He trusted that, if, as a young member, he said what he ought not to say, he might be pardoned, because of the desire and zeal he felt to see this question brought to a satisfactory conclusion, for the benefit of the colony. As an outsider, he did not think that the persons in charge of the Public Works Department had given that attention to fostering local industry which they might have given. It appeared to him that a very great deal of looseness was allowed—for instance, in the matter of railways. If one went into some of the workshops at present he would find four or five different samples of locomotive steam-engines all laid up for small repairs, not two of which were built upon the same model. The result was, that there was not a duplicate of anything, and when any particular part of an engine broke down it had to be laid up. It looked as if in this colony they were experimenting in things which had already been experimented upon in older countries, of whose experience they should take advantage. Industries of the colony might be fostered in various ways. The giving of bonuses to certain industries was at one time the only remedy. Every one was afraid of touching the Customs revenue, for fear of reducing the Treasurer's balance. He was pleased to think that at least one good result had been gained by the last general election,

because a number of members had been returned to the House on the distinct understanding that they should apply themselves seriously and earnestly to set right the great wrong under which the colony had suffered for some time—the wrong of sending away money in abundance for the purchase of articles which could be produced within the colony. He was aware that free-trade principles had taken such a hold upon the minds of many of the most advanced thinkers that they would not allow the interposition of anything which interfered with the principles of free-trade, or with what they took free-trade to mean. It would require very little argument to prove that, even supposing there was an apparent loss to the colony by the reduction of the Customs duties on particular articles, the developing, fostering, and keeping alive struggling industries which might exist at the present time would more than compensate for the loss apparently sustained. They should not stand alone and allow other colonies to take up the position of encouraging their manufactures and placing New Zealand practically in the background. He considered it a great mistake to take the duty off timber; it was an error that should be rectified at once. He must guard himself by saying that he thought the timber-merchants of the colony had attempted to impose upon buyers by keeping up the price of timber unnecessarily high. Such attempts on their part had brought about a retribution which had been all the greater because of the removal of the duty upon timber; but, because the timber-merchants had made a mistake in keeping timber at an unwarrantable price, it did not follow that the Government should intensify the evil by flooding the market with timber from foreign countries imported in foreign bottoms. He did not think any Government should be supported in adopting such a course. He trusted, before the session had concluded, that that duty—or a portion of it—would be reimposed. The whole question would come up for discussion when the report of the Committee was submitted, and he would therefore refrain from entering upon a number of points of interest which might be brought out with great advantage in connection with this matter. They might rest assured that if they postponed the consideration of this matter—if they postponed the day of settlement and put these things off in view of great constitutional questions and matters of that kind—they would have such an amount of misery brought about in the country as would make them blush for their apathy and indifference. He hoped the resolution of the honorable member for Bruce would take precedence, and that a Committee would be appointed of persons practically acquainted with the things they were to take in hand—not theoretic men, but men with a practical knowledge of the subject with which they had to deal.

Mr. SWANSON very seldom differed from the honorable gentleman who had just sat down, who he understood was not a free-trader. He thought it was the duty of protectionists and free-traders to go together as far as they could. The Committee now proposed would be able to act at once

and obtain a great deal of useful information, and effect might be given this session to their recommendation. The result would greatly facilitate the fostering and encouraging of local industries throughout the colony. The information which this motion sought for was as to what relief could be afforded to manufacturers in the colony by admitting articles free. It was different from the motions of the honorable member for Bruce and the honorable member for Auckland City West. He had received letters from various manufacturers in Auckland; he had received petitions which he would have presented, had it not been for these motions being on the Order Paper. One was to the effect that bolts and nuts for shipbuilding purposes should be admitted duty-free. The duty had been paid under protest, and he expected to be able to get the money remitted. He had letters from harness-makers and others, complaining of duties imposed in connection with their respective industries. Owing to the remissions he had been able to get made, hat-manufacturing had become a thriving industry, and a great many young men were learning the business all over the country. The late Colonial Treasurer had made considerable remissions in favour of boot-makers, which made the difference between carrying on the industry at a profit or a loss. He thought they ought, if possible, to agree to adopt the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City unanimously. They should endeavour to promote industries in the colony, and afford employment; otherwise he did not know what was to become of the young men who were growing up in the colony. The small direct loss to the revenue would be little compared to the great indirect gain, as the spending power of the colony would be enormously increased. If they could not agree about anything else, he hoped they would agree to adopt the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City, which he most heartily endorsed.

Mr. MURRAY said the question raised by the honorable member for Auckland City East was one of the burning questions of the day, and he hoped they would have an opportunity of discussing it this session. The adoption of the motion he (Mr. Murray) had placed on the Order Paper would prepare the way for dealing with another branch of the question, and for the Commission of which the honorable member for Auckland City West had given notice. He trusted they were all acting with a desire to attain the same object. He quite agreed with the proposal to appoint a Commission, and he hoped the House would agree to the motion now before it.

Mr. HALL did not think it a loss of time to discuss the matter now before the House. He believed there was hardly any subject which could more worthily engage their time and attention. The honorable gentleman who had just sat down had stated his opinion that a Commission should be appointed, and also the proposed Committee. It would, however, be inconvenient to have two bodies dealing with the same subject. The adoption of the addition to the original motion proposed by the honorable member for Welling-

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ton City would probably be the best solution of the question. It would extend the scope of the Committee's inquiry. In the first instance, the inquiry would be directed to that branch of the subject to which the motion referred—namely, the manner in which manufacturers could be encouraged by lessening or abolishing duties at present levied on articles used by them in their respective manufactures. Then, the proposed addition was to this effect: "and other means by which the establishment of colonial industries and local manufactures may be promoted." That would cover the whole subject. This Committee could be appointed at once, and proceed with its work. When they would arrive at the motion of the honorable member for Bruce was, in the present state of the Order Paper, a matter of considerable uncertainty; and it would be a great pity that much time should be lost before entering upon such an important inquiry. For these reasons, he hoped the honorable member for Bruce would see his way to agree to this addition. If any modification of the *personnel* of the Committee were required to suit the views of honorable gentlemen, no doubt that could be arranged. The appointment of this Committee was in no way antagonistic to the proposal of the honorable member for Auckland City West, whose speech on the subject was a very valuable and instructive one: on the contrary, he thought the operations of the Committee would rather lead up to the appointment of the Commission the honorable gentleman wished appointed. In the meantime, the Committee could collect valuable information and materials, with which the House could deal during the present session. The labours of a Commission would not bear fruit until a year hence, and it was desirable that in a matter of such importance so much time should not be lost. Speaking generally upon the subject, he agreed that it was of the highest importance that they should promote the establishment of manufactures in this colony. They should decide what industries and manufactures this part of the world offered the greatest natural facilities for. They should direct their efforts to the development of those natural resources of which this colony had such an abundant supply, and which it was their duty not to leave undeveloped. Whilst he believed, as a practical farmer, that farming, in a new country with such soil and climate as we had, must for many years to come be the backbone of the colony, still they would never be able to afford employment to a large population at remunerative wages, unless they did their best to add to that industry varied local manufactures. He thought every one who wished well to the colony, and who wished it to support a large population, with every material comfort surrounding it, should endeavour to co-operate, regardless altogether of party considerations, in a work of this character. He thought they all agreed upon that, but he was afraid there was some little danger lest on this occasion the rival claims of Committee-promoters might stand in the way. He hoped, however, that they would sink their differences and agree to the proposition of the honorable member for Wellington City, which would have the effect of

delegating to this one Committee the task of inquiring into the whole subject, so that they might get to work at once. If any change in the *personnel* of the Committee were required, he was quite sure his honorable friend would raise no objection to that change being made.

Mr. SPEIGHT suggested that the two resolutions might be put into one, and thus double work saved.

Mr. SHEPHARD said that, whilst he entirely agreed with the objects of this Committee, and with much, though not all, that had fallen from the honorable member for Auckland City East, he could not but think it rather unfair that Parliament should be blamed for not having paid attention to this matter. When the Premier sat on that side of the House in 1871, he moved for a Committee to inquire into native industries. That Committee sat for several sessions, and was made a joint Committee with one from the Legislative Council, and a large amount of valuable information was obtained from all parts of the colony. He (Mr. Shephard) was a member of that Committee, and he remembered that a great deal of useful information on the subject was placed in the Blue Books. It would be found, on reference to these, that there was a great deal of work already done, and the present Committee would do very well to look it up before they entered on their labours. The honorable member for Bruce was a member of the Committee, and devoted a great deal of time and attention, as he always did, to the matter submitted for investigation. The honorable member for Auckland City East had referred to the removal of the timber duty. In his (Mr. Shephard's) own district, the removal of that duty had produced a most injurious effect upon an important branch of industry, which was not merely giving employment to a great many men, but was the means of opening up the country for settlement by the clearing-away of the forest. The timber introduced to New Zealand was of an inferior quality to that sawn in this country. He did not think, although the price was somewhat lower, that there was any economy in using imported timber. By removing the timber duty, they were certainly not proceeding in a right direction; it was not a proper course to pursue to bring men into the country, and take away the means by which employment would be afforded them. The taking-away of a small duty upon grain and flour imported from other countries had also a most injurious effect on the farming industry. The duty, as it stood, had no practical effect in raising the price of grain; but it induced a larger number of persons to engage in that industry than was now the case, when other countries producing very much larger quantities, and with much cheaper labour at command, could flood the colony with their produce. There was one other branch of industry which he should like to see encouraged here—he meant the cultivation of hops. In Nelson, the climate, as he thought every honorable gentleman knew, was specially suited to the cultivation of hops. Hops had been grown of excellent quality and in large quantities in Nelson, giving employment to a great number

of persons. It was one of those industries of the place in which labour was employed very much more largely than in anything else; and yet, from the competition now going on—he spoke from his own knowledge—some of the most enterprising, energetic, and industrious cultivators had had to give up. Their capital was wasted; they could not possibly compete with hops brought in from California, where a very large amount of labour was done by Chinese. The English labour could not possibly compete with this, and, unless they took some means to preserve that industry, before many years it would be completely crushed out by Chinese competition. They talked very much against the introduction of Chinese labour into this country, but it was already competing with them from the other side of the Pacific. The Committee would do well to consider whether it would not be desirable, in the interests of the colony at large, to impose a certain amount of duty on imported hops, which would enable the plantations in this country to be carried on with a profit to their owners, and to give employment, as they had done before, to a great many people. He hoped the Committee would sift the matter, and do its work thoroughly. A Commission might be appointed afterwards. They would, however, experience some difficulty in finding gentlemen competent to carry on the work, or who had sufficient leisure to undertake it; and very few members of the House, he ventured to say, could spare the time to go about the country and take evidence. Another difficulty presented itself from the peculiar state of the law as to the disqualification of honorable members. If honorable gentlemen were disposed to separate themselves from their homes, and do a great service to the colony, the Disqualification Act prevented any payment from being received; they dared not accept any consideration for the time devoted to the work. He thought it would be well for the Government to consider whether members of Commissions of that kind should not be entitled to receive some payment for the valuable services they rendered to the country.

Mr. TOLE was glad to find that there was considerable harmony on both sides of the House on a question of such magnitude and importance, and he thought it was a pity that one month of the session had gone by without this question having been considered. There was no doubt it was a burning question: in fact, in many constituencies it was almost made a test question as to whether candidates would support the protection of local industries. And he supposed that all members, being Liberals, during the late elections gave an answer in the affirmative.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, no.

Mr. TOLE said that in many instances it was so—at any rate, in the Province of Auckland. In young countries local industries should be fostered. There was no doubt it was a burning question, and one to which attention should be given at once. The popularity of it was shown by the fact that three honorable gentlemen had hurried on their motions on the Order Paper, and it had been a race between them which should be first. But there was no accounting

Mr. Shepherd

how they should appear on the Order Paper. At this time each industry had its own grievance; and one amongst others had been presented to him particularly in Auckland—that was, complaining of the reduction of the duty on fencing wire. It was considered to be a great grievance that, whilst persons engaged in the tin trade had to pay duty upon their wire, the big squatters and land monopolists got off scot-free. There was no doubt whatever that it was a grievance, and it showed that this, amongst other things in the tariff, required to be revised. The question was, how the matter could be best approached—by Committees or Commissions. He thought this motion should be carried. It affirmed that the question should be inquired into; and there were doubtless a great number of gentlemen competent to speak upon the subject, and to give their time and much valuable information thereon, who could be found to devote themselves to the work. At the same time, he believed that, whilst this Committee sat and gathered information, it would be very useful as an adjunct to a Commission to be appointed at the end of the session. Now, with regard to the question of finding men to travel round the country, he did not think this was at all necessary. The honorable member for Auckland City West would recollect that a Commission was appointed to look into the state of the gaols. He did not see why Commissions should not be appointed in the various provincial districts. Let local Commissions be appointed to sit and take evidence, and draw up their reports, and collect, as far as possible, the fullest information. Let that be done in the various provincial districts; let the reports be collated, and produced at the next session of Parliament; and by that means a thorough revision of the tariff could be brought about. In this manner the question of disqualification would not arise. He hoped the motion for the appointment of this Committee would be agreed to; and he had no doubt it would be, as the question evidently had the sympathy of the House.

Mr. MACANDREW asked if he might be allowed to say one or two words to remove a misapprehension on the part of the honorable member who sat behind him, who had said the Government had neglected local industries in connection with the railways. He could assure the honorable gentleman that he was entirely mistaken, and that, on the contrary, the Government had, at all events during the last two years, endeavoured to give every encouragement to local industries in connection with the railways; and at the present moment there were, he supposed, from six hundred to seven hundred men in the Government workshops manufacturing and repairing plant for the railways of the colony. He hoped that very shortly the colony would be in a position to make its own locomotives. Capital was the great thing that was required: it would take a great deal of money to start a shop for building locomotives; still he thought they ought to aim at it, and had no doubt whatever that in a very short time it would be accomplished. They had abundance of the raw material and any amount of skilled labour in the country, and what

was wanted was the wherewithal to set the undertaking in motion. For example, he thought the Taranaki iron-sand might be turned to very good account in connection with the railways. He was certain that all our railway wheels could be made by castings from that sand, and could be produced at as cheap a rate as the imported article. What was wanted was some one with sufficient enterprise and money to start the thing. They had a very good plant at Taranaki on a small scale. He took it upon himself, when in the Government, to hold out an inducement to them, that if they would produce a good sample he would give them an order for £50,000 worth of wagon wheels and iron to begin with. They had produced some wheels which had been sent to the Sydney Exhibition, and which he had every reason to believe were of good quality. In America cast-iron wheels were now universally used instead of wrought-iron ones, and he hoped we should be able to take a leaf out of their book in that respect. He might say that even now we were manufacturing wheels and axles in the colony from scrap-iron, and he expected that in a short time we should be able to dispense with importing these articles. As it was now, the only things we really required to import were the springs, as we were making everything else belonging to railway carriages and trucks. In the workshops at Port Chalmers, where they had a powerful steam-hammer, there was now being manufactured from old iron a thousand pounds' worth of railway wheels and axles complete, with a view of testing the question of cost as compared with the imported article. There was another interesting fact, which the House would be glad to hear, and that was that, after the present year, we should not require to use any Newcastle coal on our railways. He believed that by the end of this year there would not be an ounce of Newcastle coal required on any of the railways in New Zealand, which fact was in itself a very great encouragement to the local industries. With regard to the proposed Committee, he confessed that he did not anticipate any very great results from it. He thought the motion of the honorable member for Auckland City West was really the right motion. As had already been remarked, a Committee of the House sat for several sessions some years ago and produced very valuable reports; but he was not aware that any tangible result had accrued from the labours of that Committee, nor did he think any such result would accrue in this case. It was not the right direction which their efforts should take. However, there could be no harm done by appointing a Committee, and he, for one, would support the motion.

Mr. SWANSON, speaking to the amendment, said there was no more opposition between the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City and that of the honorable member for Auckland City West than there was between a blacking-maker and a bleacher. The honorable member for Christchurch City was a free-trader—there were a great many free-traders in the House—and he said, "Let us see how far the free-traders can go towards supporting Native industries. Con-

sider the inquiry to that. If you introduce debatable matter, the whole question of free-trade and protection will be raised, and there will be discussion and a collision; whereas the object of this Committee is simply to discover how we can assist the local industries, and to draw up a list of articles which can be admitted free, without damage to any of the industries at present being carried on in the colony." The motion of the honorable member for Bruce, or that of the honorable member for Auckland City West, as the case might be, would come on, and then the question of protection could be fairly raised. There was nothing in the speech of the honorable member for Christchurch City which smacked in the slightest degree of protection, while it showed a desire to encourage local industries where possible. He could lay letters on the subject before the Committee, and point out cases in which articles might be admitted free, thus enabling more labour to be employed than would otherwise be the case. If they could get help from the free-traders in that way, by all means let them do so. He would be very sorry indeed to see the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City hampered with any debatable matter, and he hoped it would be carried.

Mr. DICK was very glad that such a Committee as this had been proposed to the House. It was a matter of urgent necessity that they should inquire into these matters, and he was glad that the House had at last got at something like business. This Committee would, he presumed, if appointed, consider the question of what duties could be taken off for manufactures—that was to say, whether, in some cases, the duty might be charged to the public, and be made a drawback or allowance where the article was going to be used for manufacture; and in other ways the question might be investigated. Perhaps they would do better to leave the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City as it stood, and take the others as they came on; they were to some extent of a different character. He was much pleased at hearing the remarks of the honorable member for Port Chalmers in reference to what had been done in connection with the public works of the colony. His own opinion was previously that the Minister for Public Works had much neglected the colonial industries, and had sent Home orders where there was no necessity to do so. He knew that the complaint had been that, whilst orders for thousands, and perhaps even more than thousands, went Home, there would be a small contract given in the colony, just to try whether the thing could be done at the same price; and the complaint was, "How can we, having an order for two or three, compete with those who have orders for hundreds?" In Dunedin, there were manufacturers who said that if they received an order for two hundred railway carriages they would compete with the Home manufacturer at once. When he was in Dunedin the other day he was shown a tram-car which had just been manufactured, and which was in every way equal to any which had been imported; and the manufacturer told him he could produce the car for

£30 less than had to be paid for an imported one. Now, these matters might be investigated by the proposed Committee and very important facts brought to light. Even the publication of what could be found out with regard to these matters throughout the colony, would be in itself a great advantage. It would open the eyes of the public to what could be really undertaken in the colony in the way of manufactures. He did not think that the Taranaki iron-sand, which the honorable member for Port Chalmers spoke so much about, was likely to be such a success as the honorable gentleman predicted. He was sometimes apt to think that the honorable gentleman gave encouragement where it would be better to discourage. There had been a great deal of money lost already in connection with this Taranaki sand, and he was afraid it was luring men on to their injury to encourage them by telling them this sand could be utilized. However, if men had money to spend in that way, perhaps it would be an advantage somehow. His object in rising was to express his approval of the motion of the honorable member for Christchurch City.

Mr. OLIVER hoped the House would consent to the appointment of this Committee. It was no doubt true that local industries in this country were protected to a great extent by our position as an island distant from the great sources of supply and manufacture. They were protected by the freight which it was necessary to pay to import goods, by the items of insurance, agency, and other charges. If honorable gentlemen importing goods were to set themselves to ascertain the real cost of these goods, they would find that at least ten separate items of expenditure had to be added to the invoice price before the real cost was arrived at; so that, to start with, local industries were to some extent protected. But there was no doubt that, in the past, import duties had not been levied with discrimination. The honorable member for Auckland City West had referred to the industry of carriage-making, which was growing up in various parts of the colony. Now, this colony did not furnish the requisite timber for the manufacture of carriages, to enable us to compete with the American and English articles. The timber used in the construction of buggies and carriages must, to a great extent, be imported. While that timber was admitted into the colony free, duty was imposed on the manufactured article, which afforded some little protection. But the effect of this was altogether nullified by heavy duties being charged on the various articles which were required to make up a carriage and which could not yet be made in the colony. For instance, a duty was imposed on buggy lamps, on the leather, the cloth, the nails, and the plated-ware used in the construction of a buggy. All the malleable iron which must be used, and which could not be made in the colony—the axles, the springs, and the tires of the wheels—was chargeable with the duty; so that, although it appeared that a carriage manufacturer who started the industry in the colony enjoyed some protection, the benefit which he derived from that protection was very much reduced by his having to pay duty on

Mr. Dick

all the necessary articles he had just mentioned. There was no doubt that our financial condition would necessitate a reconstruction of the tariff, and in that reconstruction the evidence which would be obtained by such a Committee as that now proposed would no doubt be very useful indeed. Although he was not a protectionist, yet he thought, if they had to impose duties for the sake of revenue, they might just as well impose them on those articles which could be produced in the colony, and so encourage native industries. With regard to what the honorable member for Port Chalmers had just said, he must confess he did not expect any very good results from the endeavour to establish as an industry the manufacture of steel from the Taranaki sand. The fact was, that some very valuable discoveries in the manufacture of steel had been made within the last few years, and the patent which was enjoyed by Mr. Bessemer up to a few years ago had expired, so that steel rails were now being manufactured in England at a less cost than was paid a few years ago for iron rails. When the honorable member for Port Chalmers made a proposal about a year ago to the English manufacturers to come out and manufacture steel rails in the colony from the material Nature had so abundantly provided us with, he (Mr. Oliver) foretold that it would come to nothing, because steel rails were being manufactured at such a low price in England that any person who endeavoured to establish an industry of the kind here must labour under a very considerable disadvantage. In the first place, there were no skilled workmen here. Not only would the furnaces, the rollers, and the whole of the appliances have to be imported, but the workmen would have to be brought out; workmen's houses would have to be erected; and, in point of fact, without a much better prospect of larger profits than the present state of the markets in Europe held out, it would be useless to expect that English capitalists would come out to start the industry here. As to the utilization of the Taranaki iron-sand, that question had been before the public for the last fourteen years. In 1867, after consulting some steel manufacturers in England on the subject, some friends of his sent twenty tons of Taranaki iron-sand to England, with the view of having it operated upon by skilled workmen; but the experiment resulted in failure. He was shown a very fine penknife that was made from it, but, beyond the production of such small articles, the attempt to utilize the Taranaki iron-sand had come to nothing. The honorable member for Port Chalmers mentioned that cast-iron wheels had been made in the colony for some time. That was perfectly true, but they could be imported from America at a much cheaper rate than they could be made from the Taranaki iron-sand. He hoped, notwithstanding the non-success of the efforts already made to establish certain industries in the colony, that the result of the labours of this Committee would be such as to assist in giving an impetus to their establishment, and thus remove the necessity for importing so many articles of commerce.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS said the remarks of the

honorable member for Port Chalmers with reference to the construction of carriage wheels from the Taranaki iron-sand induced him to offer a few observations on the general question. He was glad the honorable gentleman had devoted some attention to the matter, because the manufacture not only of carriage wheels, but of many other articles that were imported into the colony, was a subject well worthy of the consideration of gentlemen occupying the position of Ministers. In connection with the subject, he would refer to the Parapara Iron Company of Collingwood. So far as he was able to judge, he thought the quality of the iron ore there was far superior to any that had yet been referred to. During the last four or five years, while the public works of New Zealand were in full swing, they had spent something like two millions of money in importing iron rails; while at the Parapara, within half a mile of the sea, there was to be found an iron ore which contained a very large and unusual percentage of red hematite, or red oxide of iron—the iron used in the Bessemer process referred to by the Minister for Public Works. He had every reason to believe that the percentage of iron in this ore was unusually great, far greater than was found in similar products in Europe, and it was not found far beneath the ground as in the case of the Austrian and other Continental mines, but, as the result of volcanic action, was to be found on the surface of the ground, in hummocks—in fact, in little hills of iron ore. Now, considering the large sums of money they had spent in the purchase of rails under the public works policy, he thought it would not have been at all unwise to have spent, say, £50,000 towards the erection of smelting works in the neighbourhood of Parapara, where they might produce all the rails required within the limits of the colony. That would be a very great benefit. He should be very glad to hear that something could be done with the Taranaki iron-sand; but the absence of coal in the immediate neighbourhood made the success of the industry very doubtful. In the neighbourhood of Parapara there was a considerable quantity of coal. He admitted that the seams were not of large size; but on the West Coast, at no great distance from the Parapara, was to be found one of the largest deposits of coal south of the equator, which, according to results obtained at Woolwich Arsenal, contained a larger percentage of carbon than any other coal. Even before he entered the House he had often thought that this was a subject which should occupy the attention of those who were intrusted with the carrying out of the public works policy; and, if there was a probability that much more money would have to be spent in the purchase of iron rails, they ought to consider—looking at the large deposits of iron and coal that existed in the colony—whether it would not be better for the Government to step in and establish smelting works on their own account, or give assistance in some shape, so that the rails required might be manufactured within the colony. As to any interference with the doctrine of free-trade, he might point out that Mill, who was the leading writer on

free-trade, admitted that local industries formed an exception to the general rule laid down by him; and Mill added that where the natural capacity of a country was such that, by encouraging local industry, it would in a few years be able to compete successfully with the manufactures of other countries, it was justifiable to depart from the ordinary doctrine of free-trade, and support those industries. Passing from that subject, he would refer to the remarks of the Minister for Public Works, who said that steel rails and railway material from other countries, could be imported at a cheaper rate than they could be produced here. Of course, if a considerable saving could be made, it would be proper to import; but, unless the saving was something considerable, he thought it would be much better, and more profitable, to spend the money within our own limits. It was purely a question of degree. Reference had been made to the manufactures in the district from which he came, and he would take the opportunity to point to many such that that were well worthy of consideration. For instance, there was the hematite paint, which was made from the ore at Parapara. That was recognized as one of the best paints for out-door work. There were a soap factory and dye-works in Nelson, and not long ago the City Council granted a lease of a city reserve for the purpose of establishing a chinaware factory, the proprietor of which was now importing machinery from England, with a view to making ordinary cups and saucers from Nelson clay. He thought they might go a little further, and refer to the valuable report prepared for the Sydney Exhibition by Dr. Hector, which would convince anybody that they had within this colony very great facilities for the establishment of manufactures. They had a wonderful climate, coal and iron in large quantities and in accessible places, and unlimited supplies of wood. They had everything that was required to establish local industries, and it would be a great mistake if they did not enter upon the question with a determination to do more for those industries than had been done for years past.

Mr. GIBBS hoped that, whilst considering this question of encouraging local industries and removing duties from those articles imported which were likely to be used in and to assist to make profitable those industries, the Committee would be careful that they did not go too far, and commit the mistake made last year, when the duties were removed from timber, flour, &c., whereby ruin had been brought on those engaged in the timber trade, and those who had property in coasting vessels, both matters of large importance. The Minister for Public Works had referred to articles used in the building of carriages, such as leather, steel, and plated goods, some of which were already made in the country, and others in all probability would be made very shortly: they might, whilst helping the carriage-builders, be injuring others. He merely referred to these matters as an indication of his views: but as the time for adjournment was near he would not detain the House, but let the Committee be appointed; and he hoped they would take these

matters into their careful consideration, and that their labours would do something to forward so important a work.

Mr. SEDDON could not allow the motion to go to a vote without saying a few words, as this was a matter in regard to which he felt very strongly, being a mechanic himself. It was one of the questions which were brought forward during the late general elections. He found himself rather in a difficulty, as the question now stood. When it was first brought forward by the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Stevens), the intention was simply to ask for a Committee to inquire into and report upon those articles an import duty on which interfered with local manufactures. But now, by the amendment of the honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Levin), the whole tenor of the resolution was altered. He thought it would be better to allow the resolution to stand as it originally did, and to bring forward a separate resolution dealing with the subject of the amendment. If, however, it was the wish of the House, he would not object to the two being put together; but, in that case, he must insist upon an alteration in the constitution of the Committee. As at present proposed, it comprised two members from Dunedin, two from Christchurch, one from Wellington, two from Nelson, and one from Auckland; therefore other names ought to be added, to represent other localities. He contended that the whole failure of the public works policy inaugurated by Sir Julius Vogel was due to the fact that immense sums of money were sent out of the country for the purpose of importing material, machinery, and so on, instead of extending the construction of the works over a number of years, and gradually, as the colony progressed, by offering bonuses or some sort of protection, encouraging the manufacture of ironwork and other materials in the colony. A great and irreparable loss had been entailed on the colony by that line of action; and, as the last Parliament had authorized a further loan for these works, the House ought to be very careful not to follow in the footsteps of its predecessors. As an instance, he might point out the case of the Waimea Water-race. Eighty thousand pounds had been expended in the manufacture and importation of pipes for that work. It was at first proposed that the plates should be procured at Home, and sent out here; that they should be punched or drilled here, and afterwards rivetted on the spot,—as there were plenty of skilled mechanics in the place to do the work. But no; all this money was sent Home, and fully £30,000 was put into the hands of the shippers and iron-founders, which might very much better have been spent in the colony. The question at issue was this: Was New Zealand in the position to compete with other countries in manufactures? He contended that it was, and for this reason: that we had everything here necessary for manufactures—gold, timber, iron, coal, and wool. We had every means of making our own leather, sand for glass, and it was, besides, a wool-growing country unequalled, he believed, by any in the Southern Hemisphere. Seeing that we had these products in the colony, it would be a

great sin and a crime if the House continued in the course which had been pursued in past years. It would be acting against those who followed after us if, having all these products at our feet waiting to be developed, we let them there lie, and went to other countries for what we could so well produce ourselves. He trusted the resolution of the honorable member for Christchurch City would be carried; and, if the amendment was also carried, he hoped the *personnel* would be altered by the addition of some gentlemen whose names had been mentioned by the honorable member for Bruce. As he said before, there were only five centres represented on the Committee, and he thought other centres should also be represented, because in different portions of the colony there were of course different industries which should be encouraged, and evidence would be given by the members who would have practical knowledge of the resources of the various localities.

Colonel TRIMBLE did not intend to oppose the motion. He would like that he, and others who thought with him, should be allowed an opportunity of speaking upon the question, because they intended to traverse almost everything that had been said.

Mr. STEVENS said the honorable member for Newton had exactly described the intention of his resolution. It was not, as his honorable friend opposite said, a matter between the protectionists and the free-traders. The object simply was to give every facility to local manufactures by relieving them from any disabilities they might be labouring under. He had not in any way brought into the subject any question as to what duties should be imposed upon imported manufactures with a view to keeping them out and enabling the local manufactures to compete with them. That was a totally different matter. That might be considered by a Committee appointed under the propositions of the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. Hurst) and the honorable member for Bruce; but it had nothing to do with the Committee which he (Mr. Stevens) asked for. He was, of course, in the hands of the House with regard to the amendment of the honorable member for Wellington City; but he agreed with honorable members who said that it would bring debatable matter into the discussion, and he believed the original proposition would be much better.

Amendment carried, and motion, as amended, agreed to.

D. CLIMIE AND J. GWYNNETH.

Mr. HUTCHISON, in moving the motion standing in his name, would merely say that its object was twofold. The subject-matter of the petitions was of sufficient importance to warrant the appointment of a Select Committee to consider it; and the time of the Public Petitions Committee was so fully taken up that it would not be able to go thoroughly into the matter.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That a Select Committee be appointed, to consider and report upon the petitions of Daniel Climie, C.E., and John Gwynneth, C.E., both of Wellington.

Mr. Gibbs

Such Committee to consist of Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Murray, Mr. W. J. Hurst, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Bryce, Colonel Trimble, Mr. Levin, Mr. Ballance, and the mover; with power to call for persons and papers; three to be a quorum; and to report in fourteen days."—(Mr. Hutchison.)

Mr. OLIVER could not agree to the proposal of the honorable member. In the ordinary course these petitions would be referred to the Public Petitions Committee, and from the composition of that Committee the House would have every confidence that the petitions would receive every consideration. He would strongly object himself to serve upon the Committee, because he had already made up his mind upon the merits of the case from papers that had come before him in his office.

Mr. KELLY would submit that the motion was out of order. As he had pointed out on a former occasion, the Standing Orders required that all petitions should be referred, in the first instance, to the Classification Committee, by whom they were referred to the other Committees. The petition to which this motion referred had already been presented to the House, had been dealt with by the Classification Committee, and was now before the Public Petitions Committee, with a view to a report being made upon it to the House. He would therefore ask Mr. Speaker whether, under these circumstances, the motion of the honorable gentleman could be put to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER did not think the House had divested itself of the right to appoint a special Committee upon any subject which might be brought under its notice, and which it considered fit to be referred to a special Committee.

Mr. KELLY said, as that was the case, he would oppose the appointment of this Committee, and he did so on principle. He had opposed such Committees on former occasions, and the House had invariably agreed with him that it was not right to appoint Select Committees to consider matters which were already under the consideration of Sessional Committees. What would be the position, if another Committee were appointed to consider this petition? There would be two reports in the House. The Public Petitions Committee would first have to bring up its report, and this new Committee now proposed would have to wait until that report was brought up. After the Public Petitions Committee had examined all the witnesses, and taken every precaution in order to bring up a proper report, this new Committee would then have to take up the case and go over the whole ground again. It was very evident that such a mode of dealing with questions before the House was not right.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

WANGANUI ENDOWED SCHOOLS BILL.

Mr. BALLANCE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said a Bill bearing exactly the

same title was introduced by his colleague (Mr. Bryce) in 1876. That Bill proposed to regulate and modify to a large extent the trust in respect to an estate containing 250 acres, or nearly one-third of the whole area of the Town of Wanganui, which was set aside in 1852 by the then Governor, Sir George Grey, for educational purposes. The object of his honorable friend also went the length of establishing a Board of Management composed partly of *ex officio*, partly of elective, and partly of nominated members. This Bill differed from that one in this important respect, that it only sought to provide for the school at Wanganui local management, and did not in any respect alter, modify, or change the character of the trust itself. The history of the trust must be well known to most of the older members of the House. So far back as 1869 a Commission was appointed for the purpose of inquiring into this and other trusts throughout the colony of a similar character, and in the Appendix to the Journals of the House for 1870 would be found the report of that Commission, in which it was stated,—

"The rents of this estate have been appropriated to the erection of a schoolmaster's house and grammar school, except a small portion to the support of the school, which, though excellent of its kind, is not a fulfilment of the trusts contemplated, inasmuch as the class of children apparently intended by the grant to be benefited are not such as can afford to pay the fees necessarily payable to enable them to attend the school. Looking at the magnitude of the grant, and the loss which the people of the place have suffered by the diversion of the land from its original purpose, the Commissioners recommend that the land should, whenever practicable, be laid out again, and rendered available for town purposes, and that the annual proceeds should be so appropriated as to give the inhabitants of every denomination and every class a fair share in the benefits accruing from the grant."

No action whatever was taken upon that report from 1869, when the Commissioners made inquiries upon the spot, up to 1875; but in 1875 the people of Wanganui petitioned the House to take some steps to give effect to the report of the Commission, and the Public Petitions Committee presented to the House the following report:—

"In the opinion of this Committee, the Government ought to take the subject of this trust into their most serious consideration during the recess, with a view to such legislative action next session as may be required for the purpose of placing the valuable estate in question under trustees periodically elected, and for insuring the application of the proceeds to the purposes originally intended by the grant."

Nothing was done in 1875, but in the following year the Bill already referred to was introduced by his honorable friend the present Native Minister. The principal objection taken in the House in 1876 to that Bill was, that it proposed to modify the trust, and, so far as he had heard—and he had read the debate since—no objection was founded upon the fact that the Bill proposed to provide local management only in terms of the

report of the Public Petitions Committee. The Bill was then thrown out, and since then a Royal Commission, appointed under the hand of His Excellency the Governor in 1878, had taken evidence upon the subject. Now, it was in consequence of the report of the Public Petitions Committee, of the report of the Royal Commission in 1869, and of the interim report of the Royal Commission of 1878, that he had introduced this measure for the purpose of providing local management for this important trust. He might state that it had been proposed to deal with this question in the general measure affecting the whole of the trusts of a kindred character all over the colony introduced in 1871 by the Hon. Mr. Sewell, the then Minister of Justice. Mr. Sewell, in moving the second reading of the Educational and Charitable Trusts Bill, described very clearly the character of the management of the trusts with which he proposed to deal. He said,—

“Many of them had been managed in the best manner that circumstances permitted; but the unfortunate state of the colony during the last ten years had had the effect of throwing many of them into a very unsatisfactory condition. The institutions founded upon them had been suffered to go to decay, and the property had been neglected. The trusts were not fulfilled; and it was the duty of the State to see after their improvement.”

The honorable gentleman said again,—

“There was no doubt whatever that the objects for which these charities were founded had altogether, as it were, missed, and they required now to be rearranged.”

The management of this trust in Wanganui came under the description of the trusts referred to by the Hon. Mr. Sewell as badly managed—as trusts which had “missed”—because he thought the evidence which the House had before it authentically and officially produced would show conclusively that there was no trust in the colony which had been worse managed than this trust in Wanganui. The Royal Commission appointed in 1878 to inquire into the state of higher education took evidence upon this question, and two important witnesses were examined upon the subject. One of these witnesses was an old settler of Wanganui, a very intelligent person, Mr. Peat; and the other was the Bishop of Wellington, who was appointed under the Bishop of New Zealand Trusts Act of 1858. The questions and answers of the first witness were as follow:—

“5321. Do you know whether the people of Wanganui generally are satisfied with the present condition of things with regard to this trust?—No, they are not; they are very dissatisfied.

“5322. Will you state on what grounds the dissatisfaction is based?—They say the trust is not applied to the purposes for which it was intended, and it has always been mismanaged. The estate has not produced what it ought to have produced; and at present the school is only for a certain class—the wealthy class—and there are only a few—about twenty, I think—attend-

ing it. If the estate were well managed, it might be put to far better use.

“5323. *Dr. Hector.*] You say there are about twenty attending?—I have been told that by the scholars themselves—about twenty this present quarter.

“5324. You do not know what the average attendance last year was?—It was much higher. The numbers are decreasing daily.

“5325. We have a return which states that it was thirty-six. Would that be about the number?—Yes, up to the end of last year; because at the beginning of last year there were about fifty, and the numbers decreased after Mr. Godwin left. I am speaking of the present quarter, from what the boys tell me. I think there were about twenty-five last quarter.”

That was the opinion of one of the witnesses, who, he might at once explain, was slightly adverse to the trust. But he would take another witness, the Bishop of Wellington, who was strongly in favour of the trust—who, in fact, was one of the trustees—and he would give some of that witness's answers. One question was,—

“5357. Is the estate being administered now for the benefit of the poorer class in Wanganui, or for the benefit of a class above them?—The children who attend the school at present have to pay from £6 to £7 a year.”

Now, as honorable members would see in the Schedule, by the terms of the deed of trust this trust was made “for the education of the children of our subjects of all races, and the children of other poor and destitute persons being inhabitants of the islands of the South Pacific Ocean.” So that, instead of this institution being devoted to poor children generally, the revenue from it was now entirely absorbed in educating about twenty children the sons of the most wealthy portion of the community, and the fees, as the Bishop himself states, amounted to £6 or £7 a year. The next questions were,—

“5368. Then there has been a falling-off in the school?—I do not care to say more than that the master we had for about twelve months—I did not know all the particulars about him—was eccentric, and that the school fell off without one's knowing much about it.

“5373. As a matter of fact, the school was attended by children of all denominations?—Yes; but possibly we should now be inclined to restrict it and make it more of a Church school, if the community were well supplied with the high school and other schools.”

They had this position: that, in the first place, one of those trustees who resided in the City of Wellington actually admitted that he knew very little indeed about it; and he (Mr. Ballance) might state that the whole of the trustees resided at a distance from the Town of Wanganui; he believed the whole of them were resident in the City of Wellington. He could assure the House that this estate was managed entirely by a commission agent, under a power of attorney from those trustees: that, when the property was leased or re-leased, instead of public tenders being called for or publication taking place, in a majority of

Mr. Ballance

instances those releases were given, and new leases were made out by private agreement. He thought it was perfectly clear that those trustees knew very little indeed of the management of the trust. The next position was this—and he thought it was one of even greater importance: It would be noticed from the Schedule that this valuable trust was intended for children of all denominations, and not for children of one denomination. He believed a valuable legal opinion had been given upon this question by one of the highest legal authorities in the colony, to the effect that it was intended for children of all denominations, and not for children of one. Now, they had the admission of one of the trustees that his intention was to “restrict it,” and make this property applicable to the children of one denomination only—the children of Church of England parents. Another question, which confirmed exactly the position he had taken up, he would read to the House: “How is Wanganui supplied at the present time with institutions for secondary education?—I do not know that I am competent to give an opinion. I have not been there very much.” So that really the trustees left this property to the management of this commission agent, by power of attorney, and knew nothing about it. The next position was this: that for the last two years the average attendance was forty-five children of wealthy parents. According to the evidence he had read, the attendance had dwindled down to about twenty; so that there followed, as clearly as effect could follow from cause, the result of the present system of management. The Bill that he had introduced was intended to do this, and no more: To provide a Board of Governors, appointed by the Governor in Council, to manage this trust. In the Bill before the House the members of the Board were to be nominated by the Governor in Council; but he might explain that this was merely a matter of detail. So far as the constitution of the Board was concerned, if the principle of local management were conceded, he was prepared to allow the Board to be constituted in any manner the House might think fit. The only objection that was taken to the Bill of his honorable friend in 1876 was that it affected the character of the trust. Now, there was nothing in this Bill which in the slightest degree affected or modified the trust itself. It simply provided for local management. He maintained that, according to the evidence adduced, the management in the past had not been satisfactory, and he asked for a local Board to manage the institution upon the spot. It appeared to him that now, when every one admitted the necessity for more ample and satisfactory provision being made for higher-class education, and considering the limited amount of funds which could be spent in providing higher-class education, the House would see the expediency and sound policy of enabling districts themselves to organize trusts and endowments which had been set aside for higher education. He would now move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PITT would like to have Mr. Speaker's ruling as to whether or not the Standing Orders

relating to private Bills had been complied with in this case.

Mr. SPEAKER said, if there were any doubt as to whether the Bill was a private Bill or not, there was a special tribunal appointed to consider and determine that question. If the Bill were referred to the Joint Committee on Private Bills, it would report whether this was a private Bill or not. The honorable member could make a motion, if he thought fit, that the Bill be referred to that Committee.

Mr. PITT moved, That the Bill stand referred to the Joint Committee on Private Bills. He thought there was no doubt, looking at the Bill, that it was a private Bill. Standing Order 31, relative to private Bills, stated, “Such declaration shall state if the proposed Bill gives power to effect any of the following objects—that is to say: Power to interfere with any Crown, ecclesiastical, or corporation property, or property held in trust for public or charitable purposes.” It was perfectly clear, and the mover himself must admit, that this was a private Bill. He would call the attention of the House to an advertisement signed by the honorable member himself, which appeared in the *Wanganui Chronicle*, dated the 16th October, 1879. It was as follows:—

“Notice.—Wanganui Industrial School.—In accordance with the Standing Order of the Legislative Council, I hereby give notice that it is intended to introduce a Bill for the purpose of constituting a Board for the management of the trust property granted for an industrial school at Wanganui.—J. BALLANCE. 16th October, 1879.”

That confirmed him still further in the opinion that this was a private Bill. The honorable gentleman, in moving the second reading, referred to another Bill, which had been introduced in 1876 by the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Bryce). He understood the mover of the present Bill to state that it differed from that measure in this respect: that it did not attempt to interfere with the trust as set out in the Crown grant. In the Schedule to the Bill the Crown grant was set out, vesting the property in the manner stated by the honorable gentleman. It was perfectly clear that the property was vested in persons belonging to a particular body. The 14th section provided,—

“Upon the constitution of the Board the lands mentioned in the grant set forth in the Schedule hereto, together with all buildings thereon, shall cease to be vested in the trustees, and, without any conveyance or assurance whatever, be absolutely vested in the Board, for an estate in fee-simple, subject nevertheless to all the trusts and for the intents and purposes for which the same were respectively conveyed to or held in trust by the trustees, and all powers of management and control of the trustees over such lands shall wholly cease, and such management and control shall be vested in the Board.”

He contended, therefore, that this Bill did very materially attempt to alter the trusts of the property. The preamble of the Bill stated that the land was recently vested in the Bishop of New Zealand, under “The Bishop of New Zealand

Trusts Act, 1858," and that the land was vested in trustees appointed according to the Act of the General Assembly; and this Bill attempted to alter that state of things. The Bill, on the face of it, and the observations made by the honorable member in moving the second reading, corroborated the opinion he had formed that it was a private Bill. There was good reason shown for referring it to the Joint Committee on Private Bills, in order to ascertain whether it was a private Bill or not, and as to whether the requirements relative to such Bills had been complied with. He did not intend to discuss the merits of the Bill at that stage. He should have an opportunity of doing that on a subsequent occasion. When the previous Bill was introduced in 1876, the whole matter connected with this land was very fully gone into, and an exhaustive debate took place upon it. That Bill was then rejected by a large majority on the second reading, and the whole history of the matter was fully and fairly set out. When this Bill came up again for second reading, he should have something more to say in the matter.

Mr. SHEEHAN entirely differed from the honorable gentleman who had just sat down. This was by no means a private Bill; it was a measure dealing with public property, given for public purposes. He would not now discuss the merits of the Bill. The honorable member in charge of the Bill was perfectly right in bringing it forward as a public Bill, and he trusted he would divide the House on the question. If they held that the Crown lands given for educational purposes for the benefit of the inhabitants of the colony were to be deemed private property, the House would not be able to interfere in any way with the trustees appointed to manage such property; it would be unable to inquire into their action. He should like to see the whole of these trusts brought before the House, and the trusts altered so as to make them trusts for educational purposes for the advantage of the people of the colony generally.

Mr. BRYCE said the honorable gentleman who had just spoken had referred to the merits of the question of whether it was a private Bill or not. If honorable gentlemen would refer back to the proceedings of this House they would see that one of the trustees had brought in a Bill to amend the grant, and it was considered a public Bill. In 1876 a Bill was brought in by Sir Julius Vogel to alter the trust in the same way as this Bill now proposed to do, and it was considered a public Bill. He (Mr. Bryce) had brought in a Bill for the same object, and it was considered a public Bill. For the reason stated by the honorable member for the Thames, and in view of the precedents he now referred to, this must be considered a public Bill and be dealt with as such. He submitted to Mr. Speaker whether an undeniably public Bill such as this was should be intercepted in the way proposed, under the pretence of sending it to a Committee to inquire and ascertain whether it was a private Bill or not. He considered such a course unfair, and, if allowed, the business of the House would be most seriously interfered with.

Mr. Pitt

He submitted that upon every ground this was a public Bill, and not a private one.

Mr. KELLY would submit that this was a public Bill, for this reason: that it dealt with land of the colony given over in trust. The land had never been sold or dealt with as private property. It was simply held by trustees as public property in trust for a certain purpose. If the House decided that this was a private Bill, they would have no control whatever over such public trusts. The lands in question were public lands, held in trust by certain individuals for public purposes. Therefore he would say that this Bill was, to all intents and purposes, a public Bill.

Mr. GISBORNE said the 292nd Standing Order, relating to public Bills, described what should be considered as private Bills: "Private Bills shall be understood to be Bills which are promoted for the private interests of individuals or companies, or which, by their provisions, directly interfere with the private property of individuals." He did not think it could be held that this Bill interfered in any way with the private property of individuals. If such were held to be the case the House would practically be debarred from interfering with charitable trusts. The Commission which had sat on this subject, and the House, had in former cases regarded these properties as public properties held in trust for public purposes. This could not be regarded as a private Bill, because it did not interfere with private property. It merely proposed to change the management of the trust, and to see that the trust was properly fulfilled.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the question the House had to determine was, not whether this was a public Bill or not, but whether it should not go to the Committee of Selection, which was the proper body to determine whether or not it was a private Bill. Those who wished to pass this Bill would gain their object by admitting that first step. With regard to these trusts throughout the colony, he, in common with the honorable member for Totara, had for years past formed a very strong opinion that they required revising and utilizing, in the interests of the colony generally. But, at the same time, he had always held that it was a very dangerous thing to approach a trust—whatever trust that might be—by an Act of this Legislature, without every precaution being taken to inquire carefully into that trust. He thought that property of this kind should be dealt with in this House in common with similar properties, and not be dealt with individually as an individual case, without reference to some general principle to be adopted with respect to these trusts. He thought the honorable gentleman who had brought in this Bill had scarcely put that question as fully as he might. He (Mr. Rolleston) thought that some further inquiry and some further information on this matter were necessary before the House could fairly be called upon to pass the Bill, which did practically alter the trust. He thought some Bill was necessary in order to more clearly define the nature of this trust, which at present was ill-defined and unsatisfactory. He was free to admit that the school, as it now existed, could not be said to be

what was originally intended in the terms of the trust. He thought the time had come when these trusts ought to be more generally utilized; and honorable members were in a somewhat unfortunate position that evening, because there were not present those gentlemen who knew most about this particular matter. Formerly they had the advantage of the presence of Mr. Hunter, one of the trustees, who gave very full information to the House; and they had also the advantage of the opinion of the gentleman who instituted this trust originally—Sir George Grey. He found that Sir George Grey and the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) both voted against the last Bill introduced practically for the same purpose. They went further, and said that the Bill should not be considered by the House. He was not prepared to say that. He thought that very considerable good would come of this and other questions being considered. The honorable gentleman who had charge of the Bill unintentionally misled the House with regard to any action of the Public Schools Commission. Up to the present time there had been no report whatever by the Public Schools Commission upon the question of this and similar trusts. The House had appointed a Commission for the purpose, and, whether or not it was now determined to wait for that action as affecting this and other trusts, it ought to be clearly understood that up to the present time that Commission had expressed no opinion. He did not think that the House should understand that this Bill did not alter the trust; but he was not going to argue that point. He held that the present position of the trust was one that required a better definition, and that it required to be placed on a better footing. There was no doubt that this Bill did alter the trust, and altered it very materially. He thought it would be right if an opportunity were given to the trustees in this matter to be heard before the Bill was dealt with. It would be a very dangerous precedent for the House to deal with a Bill of this kind without giving any opportunity to those concerned to state what they might have to say in the matter. He did not possess sufficient information to judge of the case. The House had got a certain amount of information in the report before it, but this subject had not yet been brought by the Commission before the House. He hoped the House would consider well before deciding to proceed further. The honorable gentleman who had charge of the Bill said that the only aim of the measure was to obtain local management. The House ought to consider whether that would not be best brought about by dealing thoroughly and openly with the trustees, and giving them an opportunity of being heard; and that would best be done by a Bill of this kind being submitted to the ordeal of a private Bill. This was not a strictly private Bill, but it was a Bill that should be carried through with the full cognizance of those concerned, and after hearing what they had to say in the matter.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR said he thought the practice had been, where doubts had arisen as to the exact nature of a Bill, to take the second

reading at the promoter's risk. Frequently that had been done. If, at a subsequent stage, on reference to a Committee, it was found to be out of order, of course the Bill fell through. He believed this had been repeatedly done with regard to Bills on which doubts had arisen. The second reading had been allowed if the House approved of the principle, and subsequently the Committee decided whether the Bill was in order or not. The principle of this Bill—that some change should be made—seemed to be admitted by the Minister of Lands, as well as by the mover of the Bill; so that, the principle being affirmed, he saw no reason why the second reading should not be allowed. He did not rise to draw attention so much to that point as to the Standing Orders in another place with reference to dealing with local Bills. He would like to know whether that House was prepared to accept those Standing Orders without inquiry or without consultation on its part. He might be in ignorance, but he was not aware that any Committee of that House had sat jointly with a Committee of the other branch of the Legislature to consider such Standing Orders; and it seemed to him a very great stretch of power for them to say in another place that they would not consider Bills coming from the House of Representatives, or from the people, unless they were presented to them within so many days after the Houses had met. It might be expedient, but it seemed to him to be taking upon themselves the function of depriving the people of their right to approach Parliament during the time in which the Crown had chosen it should be assembled together. It was a question that ought to be looked into at some later stage of the session, if they had time to do so. Until the matter was inquired into more fully he was not prepared to bow down to or accept the Standing Orders of another place. The fact that the honorable member for Wanganui had thought fit to advertise his intention did not in any degree stamp this as a private Bill. At most it stamped it only as a local and personal Bill. He submitted that the question of the second reading should be allowed to be put, and that the promoter should take his risk of its being a private Bill, that having been, as he (Mr. De LaTour) understood, the practice since he had been in the House.

Captain RUSSELL pointed out that the preamble of the Bill now before the House, though much shorter, virtually meant the same thing as the preamble to the Church Trust Property (Canterbury) Bill. The Committee of Selection had decided that the Canterbury Bill was a private Bill; and in all probability the Bill now before the House would be treated as a private Bill.

Mr. MOSS would like to say a few words with reference to this Bill. It was one of a class to which he had a great objection. He had a very strong feeling in the matter. A similar Bill was passed for the Auckland College and Grammar School, and he would refer to that case to illustrate what he meant. At one time the school was managed by the Board of Education. It was part of the property of the people of the Province of

Auckland, and they most reasonably looked forward to the time when it would crown the educational edifice—when the best boys from the public and private schools could be admitted there to receive higher education. That school had since been put under a separate Board of Governors, and detached altogether from the general system of education, and it was practically becoming a school largely for the education in the ordinary branches of knowledge of those children whose parents could afford to pay a certain sum for them. Bills and schools of that kind were increasing, and he thought the House would excuse him if he called attention to the great abuse of the practice in the Old Country. Take Eton, for example. That was one of the grandest schools in the world. It was endowed and founded for the education of seventy indigent scholars. In the course of years the endowments had become of great value. Certainly it would have done great good if the number of seventy had been increased as the wealth of the school increased. At the present time four hundred boys paid high fees to be educated. The enormous increase in the value of the endowments did not go to increase the benefits to the public. The money was spent in all sorts of ways, and the original number of seventy boys was still maintained, where probably seven hundred or a thousand boys might be receiving a good education if the original purpose of the endowments had been carried out. He would not quote other schools; but he thought he would be safe in saying that they would not find a single school in England with regard to which the trusts had not been perverted from their original purpose. He had only a few words to say in reference to the Bill now before the House. This Bill provided that one-third in number of the scholars, both resident and day scholars, should be admitted free of all payment or charges whatever. Now, the question arose, Who was to select those boys to be admitted? Who was to have the selection of this one-third?

Mr. SPEAKER thought the point of order had better first be decided—namely, whether, in the first instance, the Bill should be sent to the Joint Committee on Private Bills.

Mr. HALL said he was inclined to think this was not a private Bill, though he did not assume to give any decided opinion in the matter. Where, however, a reasonable doubt existed as to the precise nature of the Bill, it should be referred to the Committee representing both branches of the Legislature, in order that those doubts might be dealt with in the first instance. Such Committee could go more carefully into the matter, and were better posted up in the subject than members of the House generally were. Surely, when a case of this kind arose, where there was a reasonable doubt, they would be altogether departing from the spirit of their Standing Orders if they took it upon themselves to decide a question for the decision of which a special Committee of both branches of the Legislature had been appointed.

Mr. BALLANCE, speaking to the point of order, thought the House was much more com-

Mr. Moss

petent to decide the question of whether this was a public or a private Bill than a Select Committee, and he would have more confidence in the judgment of the House than in that of a Committee. The Bill had been some days before the House, and many members must have read it. The Bill of 1876 was exhaustively discussed, and no doubt the features were remembered by honorable members. With regard to the point raised by the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt), he thought the honorable gentleman could not have read the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council. One of those Standing Orders, without any reference whatever to private Bills, said that in case of any local Bill the parties introducing the Bill must produce evidence that notice had been given, in the district which was affected by the Bill, of the intention to introduce it, and of its character. That was precisely what had been done in this case. This also answered the objection taken by the Minister of Lands, that the trustees did not know anything about it. He thought the honorable member for Nelson City would admit that the trustees had communicated with him, and that they were quite cognizant of the Bill. There was a precedent for this being treated as a public Bill in "The Bishop of New Zealand Trust Act, 1858," which gave power to the Bishop of New Zealand to transfer his trusteeship to other persons, and which was not in any way regarded as a private Bill. This Bill only provided for an extension of the power contained in that Act, and therefore should also be treated as a public Bill.

Mr. HUTCHISON did not know whether this was a public or a private Bill, but he was quite satisfied in his own mind that it ought to be a public Bill. He was the more satisfied of that, from the fact that the method of dealing with private Bills was not so satisfactory, in his opinion, as it should be. Reference was made by the honorable member for Napier (Captain Russell) to a Bill which had nearly passed through the House, and which, according to information he had received, dealt with property of the value of something like half a million. That measure, affecting trusts in the Provincial District of Canterbury alone, connected with one single ecclesiastical denomination, had gone through the House so far without any member, except those on the Select Committee, knowing anything about it. The Select Committee would, no doubt, bring up a report which would be agreed to, members would not know how it had been arrived at, and there would be no discussion in the House on the merits of the Bill. He did not mean to say there would be anything wrong in all that—quite the contrary; but he submitted that Bills dealing with reserves for any purpose whatever—religious or otherwise—and involving such large sums of money, ought to come very closely and publicly under the review of the House, and of all the members of it. It would do the trusts no harm, but a great deal of good. He was rather revolutionary in the matter of these trusts, and was inclined to advocate their revision for the good of the public from time to time, if necessary. He happened to know something

about this Wanganui trust, and he was quite satisfied it would be for the public benefit that the Bill should pass. Not that the trust should be taken from the purpose for which it was originally created, but quite otherwise. It was the contention, he presumed, of the mover of the Bill, and of those who supported it, that the trust had not been carried out according to the original bequest, and had been turned to other purposes. He, however, thought it desirable, and only fair, if it could be done, that the present trustees should in some way be heard on this question; and perhaps that course could be adopted after the second reading.

Mr. MOSS, speaking to the question of whether this was a public or a private Bill, said it proposed to take away great privileges from a large number of people. There was no doubt that this property was originally intended for the free education of a certain number of children. Instead of appropriating it to that purpose, they were now, by this Bill, deliberately declaring that it should be devoted to the free education of only one-third the number of children who attended the school, the rest having to pay. That, he thought, was altering the trust in a very material manner, and affecting private interests to a considerable extent. The honorable member for Wellington City who had just sat down said it was for the public good. Well, it appeared to him (Mr. Moss) to be greatly to the public injury when such changes took place. The endowment was originally designed for the free education of children whose parents could not afford to pay for them, and, moreover, for children of all conditions; and they would be materially altering the nature of the trust if they said that in future only one-third of the children attending the school should have this privilege. He thought that, in the first place, they were acting in a manner directly contrary to their established system, because they were drawing invidious distinctions between those children whose parents could not afford to pay and those whose parents could, and that distinction was opposed to the whole spirit of our educational system.

Mr. BUNNY hoped the House would not agree to refer this Bill to the Select Committee. They were quite competent themselves to form an opinion as to whether or not it was a private Bill. In his mind there was not the shadow of a doubt but that it was a public Bill; and if they once allowed two or three members of that House and two or three members of the Council to sit in judgment upon Bills of this character they would be shut out from passing many useful and necessary measures. His opinion was, that they ought to pass the second reading of this Bill, that then it should be referred to a Select Committee chosen fairly from the House, and that the Committee should go fully into the matter, and call upon the present trustees to state their objections to the Bill.

Mr. MACANDREW agreed very much with what had fallen from the honorable member for Wairarapa. On the last occasion when a similar Bill to this was before the House he voted against it. He did not propose to oppose the second

reading now: at the same time he wished to guard himself from being committed to vote for it at the remaining stages. The Bill involved a very dangerous precedent—a precedent, at all events, which might prove very dangerous, and one regarding which they should be very chary how they acted. There could be no doubt that there were two parties in this case. There were the parties whose administration had been challenged, and it was only right that they should have an opportunity of showing cause why the Bill should not pass, which opportunity would be afforded them if the matter were referred to a Select Committee.

Mr. SPEIGHT, with regard to the question of whether this was a public or private Bill, believed he was correct in saying that it had already been before the House in former years twice, if not thrice, and that on all those occasions it had been treated as a public Bill.

Amendment negatived.

Captain RUSSELL said he, at any rate, would vote against the second reading of this Bill. He voted against the Bill of 1876, and certainly considered it his duty to oppose this measure, and mainly upon the ground that he objected altogether to the 31st clause of the Bill, in which it was provided that only one-third of the scholars should be educated free. On reading the grant to the Industrial School at Wanganui, it was evident that it was intended that the school should be for the benefit of the children of poor and destitute people of all races, not only of New Zealand, but also of the Pacific Islands. If, therefore, the House passed this Bill it would, in his opinion, directly violate the trust for which this endowment was granted; and, though he by no means thought it was absolutely necessary to adhere to the letter of the trust for all time, still he did think there should be no attempt to violate in so flagrant a manner as was proposed the evident intentions of the trust. It would be a very great pity if so valuable a trust should, in the course of time, be made the vehicle for the enormous amount of patronage which must necessarily occur if a certain proportion of the pupils did not pay, whilst others did pay. It was, as pointed out by the honorable member for Parnell, at variance with the whole educational system of the colony, and was offering a premium to the richer class to send their children to the school, directly benefiting them to an extent to which no other children could be benefited under the present system. The time would come, perhaps, when the whole of the educational trusts throughout New Zealand would receive careful revision, but he did not think they should be dealt with in this piecemeal way, and for that reason he would vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHISON said it seemed to him that the honorable member for Napier did not quite understand the question. The fact was, that the complaint he made as to the misappropriating of the trust was the great complaint that had been urged against the institution during the whole time of its existence. Up to a very recent period, at all events, the school had been the only high school, or anything approaching to the stand-

ing of a high school, in the Wanganui District. So far from being an industrial school, or a school for the education of the children of the poorer classes, it was simply a school for the education of the children of the richer classes. No attempt had been made to fulfil the trust, and, while he approved of the general principles of the Bill, he should reserve to himself the right to propose amendments in several of its clauses, and notably the one referring to one-third of the children being admitted free. Either all the children should pay something, or they should all be free. He also disapproved utterly and entirely of the constitution of the Board. He had no belief at all in a school like this being governed by a nominated Board. The best way that could be done would be to hand it over to the Education Board of the locality, who should receive the revenues and appropriate them for the benefit of the trust; or, if that was not done, it should be handed over to a Board appointed by the rate-payers of Wanganui. That was the only Board competent to manage the trust: at all events, that was the view he should endeavour to enforce when the Bill went into Committee. Approving most heartily the principle of the Bill, he should like to see the intentions of the founder of the trust, Sir George Grey, carried out in their integrity.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said he should vote for the second reading, although he should like to see the Bill go to a Select Committee, in order that the present trustees should have an opportunity of refuting the allegations of the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance), if they were able to do so, because it would be a very dangerous principle to establish, that a trust should be changed from one body to another without very careful inquiry. If the object of the trust had been carried out the trust should not be changed, and a Committee would be able to determine that point. Perhaps the Waste Lands Committee, or the Public Petitions Committee, would be best qualified to investigate the matter.

Mr. GISBORNE said he would vote for the second reading, under the same reservations as those made by the honorable member for Port Chalmers. He had always set his face against divesting a trust of land and changing the trust without the consent of the trustees, or without proper compensation being given. This Bill said in effect that the trust has been neglected, and that in the public interest it was desirable to change the management; but even in that case he thought the Bill, after the second reading, should be referred to a Committee, in order that the trustees might have an opportunity of being heard in opposition to the Bill. If they advanced good reasons against the change he should be disposed to give favourable consideration to those reasons at a future stage of the Bill. Although the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill wanted local management, he did not go the right way to secure it. The Governor in Council might appoint the same trustees, or other absentees whose administration might not be satisfactory. If he wanted local management the trust should be elective.

Mr. Hutchison

Mr. OLIVER, in answer to the remarks of the honorable member for Wellington City, who said that the trust had not been fulfilled in the past, observed that two wrongs did not make a right. The endowment, as originally made, provided for the education of children of poor persons, the subjects of Her Majesty and others, but the educational system of the colony provided for the education of all the children of the colony: therefore the trustees need no longer carry out the purposes of the original endowment. As to one-third of the scholars being educated as free scholars, he thought the principle of having free pupils and paying pupils most objectionable, and, if the Bill passed the second reading, he should, in Committee, if no other member did so, move the amendment of that clause. There were, it was true, some scholars at the high schools and colleges who paid no fees, but they were in no sense free scholars. They were talented children, who by their industry had obtained scholarships which entitled them to free instruction. That was no stigma—it was rather a title of honor; and that was the line they should endeavour to follow in their educational system. For his part he hoped to see the educational system of the colony perfected in such a manner that any child, however low in the social scale, who proved to be possessed of talent, should have such facilities given him that he could advance without unnecessary obstacles from the primary to the secondary schools, and so on until he reached the highest and most honorable position. In that way he thought free education might be made to redound to the credit of the colony; but this principle of making one-third of the scholars free scholars was highly objectionable.

Mr. TURNBULL said he also should vote for the second reading of the Bill, although it raised a difficult question, which they would shortly have to face—namely, whether one-half of the colony was to pay very great attention to education, to which very large reserves were devoted, while the people of the other half were being brought up in ignorance. This Bill appeared to be of a very peculiar nature. There was no doubt that this grant was made for the benefit of the Church of England; but, as in many other cases, the Church of England had entirely neglected the trust. It could not be said that it would be an injustice to take the land from the Church, because it was taken from the lands of the Crown, and the people therefore had a right to resume it at any time if they thought fit. It stood in a very different position from the trust land in Canterbury. That land had been bought and paid for long ago by private individuals, and could not be taken away. But he would like to see the question raised, whether it would not be better to take all these reserves and throw them into one common educational fund for the whole colony. As to the Bill itself, when it went into Committee he should certainly object to the clause relating to the free scholars.

Mr. ROLLESTON regretted that they had not now the advantage of the presence of one of the trustees, as they had when this subject was discussed on a former occasion. When the honor-

able member for Wanganui moved the second reading of the Bill, he said that the trusts had not been fulfilled. He (Mr. Rolleston) had a very distinct recollection of the debate that took place three years ago: it was very clearly shown then that the trust had not been fulfilled in past times in consequence of the war; and therefore there was every excuse for the trust not having been fulfilled up to a certain date. What the position of the school was now he was not in a position to say fully; but, since the honorable gentleman spoke, he had taken the trouble to read the evidence given before the Royal Commission, which still had to report upon this question, and which, he again repeated, had not yet reported. In that evidence it distinctly appeared that during the last two years very considerable expenditure had been incurred by the trustees, that the buildings had been enlarged, that masters had been appointed, and that every effort had been made by the trustees to fulfil the trust. But he would not ask the House now to judge of that matter. The position he took up on this question was this: that, before they changed the trust, they ought to be sure of their ground and understand what they were doing. The matter ought to be inquired into by a Committee, before they went any further. In fact, he understood that many honorable members intended to vote for the second reading on that understanding. Even in the short time at his disposal, he had obtained information which to some extent refuted the statements made by the honorable gentleman, and he did not like to hear statements made which nobody was in a position to disprove, in the absence of the trustees. He must repeat, what he had already led honorable members to believe, that there was no proof whatever that the trust had been mismanaged. It had laboured under very considerable disadvantages in the past, and it might be found that it was only necessary to give a clear definition of the position of the trust. The honorable gentleman who moved the second reading rather confused him by taking two distinct lines of argument. The honorable gentleman first appeared to wish to see the original purposes of the trust carried out—that was to say, that it should be devoted to industrial, religious, and educational purposes for the benefit of both races, and probably of both sexes. Clearly that class of school was specially intended for the benefit of the indigent, and for purposes other than those indicated by the honorable member. But before the honorable gentleman sat down he said this was a question of the greatest importance, because the mind of the people was now very much engaged in considering the best means of promoting higher education. The two statements of the honorable gentleman did not appear by any means to coincide. He pointed out these discrepancies chiefly for the purpose of showing that it would not be right for the House to proceed further with the Bill unless there was a distinct understanding that it should be referred to a Select Committee after the second reading, in order that full inquiry might be made into the whole circumstances of the case. On the understanding

that the Bill would be referred to a Select Committee, which he understood the mover agreed to, he would not oppose the second reading.

Mr. SEYMOUR was of opinion, from the tendency of this debate, that the course which was pursued by the other branch of the Legislature in regard to measures of this kind was absolutely correct, and one which it was desirable the House should follow. That course was to appoint a Select Committee to deal with all these local measures. It was quite certain that the time would come again, as it had come in the past, when a large number of such measures would be brought forward, and when it would be impossible for honorable members to make themselves acquainted with all their provisions. He was bound to say, with reference to the Bill now before the House, that he had not given it that consideration which it appeared, from the remarks of honorable gentlemen all round the House, it deserved. There were very different opinions expressed with regard to changing the object of the trust, and also with regard to the provisions of some of the clauses of the Bill, and under those circumstances he thought it was very desirable that this measure, together with others of a similar character, should go before a special Committee. In his opinion, a Sessional Select Committee ought to be appointed for that purpose; for, if there was to be a special Committee for each particular case, very great delay must ensue. The honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill would probably consent to its going to a Select Committee; but he would find that that would very materially delay the passage of his measure, unless he asked the special indulgence of the House to have the Committee appointed without notice. Fully agreeing with those who thought that the measure should be submitted to the careful consideration of a Select Committee after it had passed the second reading, still he was quite aware that it would involve considerable delay; and therefore he thought the House would do well to adopt the course pursued by the other House, and appoint a special Committee to consider all these measures. Change of trust was a matter which the House should regard with very great care, and in this case there were also charges of maladministration, and those against whom the charges were made should have an opportunity of defending themselves and stating how they had administered the trust. But, even if it were proved that they had maladministered the trust, it was not absolutely certain that passing a Bill vesting the property in other trustees would be a perfect cure. Perhaps some other course might be found more calculated to subserve the object for which the trust was created.

Mr. SWANSON said that this matter came before the House some years ago, and he was a member of the Committee to which it was referred. The impression made upon his mind by the inquiry then instituted was that a very considerable portion of the Town of Wanganui, in which streets had been laid out, had been turned into one paddock, with no passage through it, by the existence of this trust. It also struck him then that this trust, which had been given to the

Church of England to educate the people, had been much neglected; and it would be very little use passing these Bills, because the gentlemen in whose hands the trust was, while neglecting to give such education as could be afforded with the means at their disposal, were determined to stick to the land, unless they were driven out by a lawsuit. He felt convinced, too, that, even if the case were won against them in the Supreme Court here, they would appeal Home against the decision. That was the impression on his mind, and he could tell the House that the Bishop of Wellington would take that course, unless he had very much altered his mind lately. Let honorable members consult the celebrated opinion that was given on the subject, which he thought the Government had been rather disposed to keep secret, and then judge for themselves, because it was not of much use his merely giving his impression. He would vote for the second reading of the Bill, but he would warn the House that it would be little more than a waste of time passing it.

Mr. PITT was sorry that the late Premier was not present, as no doubt the House would have heard his voice loudly raised against the passage of this Bill. When a similar measure was introduced by the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Bryce) on a former occasion, Sir George Grey gave a very instructive history of how these trusts were created, and raised a very solemn warning against any undue interference with them. The honorable gentleman showed that similar trusts were created not only for the Church of England, but also for the Roman Catholics and, he believed, the Wesleyan body; and likewise made reference to what the honorable member for Newton had stated, that, Wanganui having increased in importance, a very large portion of that town was shut out from improvement through the existence of this trust. But the honorable gentleman argued, Was it a reason that, because the property had improved in value, it should be taken from the persons to whom it had been granted? What the honorable gentleman contended was, that land of equal value in some other locality should be given in exchange for this land, and then there would be an end to the difficulty. He (Mr. Pitt) was rather surprised to hear the remark of the honorable member for Timaru, that, because the trustees mismanaged this property, which was taken out of the public estate, therefore it should be taken away from them. He asked the House to pause before it committed itself to such a doctrine as that. The House was asked to interfere with Church property and take it away from the persons beneficially interested behind their backs, and without giving them any opportunity of defending themselves. The House was asked to take upon itself the functions of the Supreme Court, where, at all events, all parties would be heard, and the circumstances would be calmly and carefully inquired into. He objected to this Bill for the reason stated by the honorable member for Napier (Captain Russell). There were other similar trusts, and, if it were true that they were unsatisfactorily administered, then let the whole

question be dealt with generally, and not be taken up in this piecemeal manner. The late Attorney-General (Mr. Stout), in speaking on the second reading of the Bill introduced in 1876, said,—

“He believed that education should be purely secular, and that it was not the duty of the State to provide religious instruction at all; but under this grant he found that it was one of the conditions of the endowment that religious instruction should be given—that was, religious education according to the tenets of the Episcopal Church. And as it laid that down, and as the honorable gentleman said that the object of this grant had not been carried out, he did hope, when this question was considered, that the grants to all other religious bodies for educational purposes would be put on the same footing. It would be monstrous to say that land granted to one Church should be seized, and that land belonging to other religious bodies should not be seized.”

He quite agreed with that opinion; and for the reason stated by the honorable member for Napier (Captain Russell)—that these matters should be dealt with on one general plan—he would vote against the second reading, and was only sorry that his motion for referring the Bill to the Joint Committee on Private Bills had been lost. He regretted that members appeared to think that that Committee really existed for no useful purpose, and that the House had no confidence in it. He should have thought that the Committee would serve a useful purpose; but, if not, the sooner it was done away with the better.

Mr. SHRIMSKI would support the second reading of the Bill, and thought it was time to alter the management of this trust. The trust was created for the purpose of educating children of all denominations, but, if it was only to educate one class at the expense of the rest, that purpose should be changed.

Mr. HAMLIN had voted against this Bill on the last occasion that it was brought before the House, and he need hardly tell honorable members that he would do so again, on the present occasion. He could not help feeling some alarm when he saw honorable gentlemen come down with Bills to interfere with such trusts as this, and do away with them. To pass this measure would simply be to insert the thin edge of the wedge of confiscation, and they would see honorable members for years to come bring down Bills to destroy similar trusts. They would simply state that the trusts had not been fulfilled in accordance with the letter of the law, and therefore there was a good case for doing away with them altogether. As the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill had not taken the advice of the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt) and referred the Bill to the Joint Committee on Private Bills, he (Mr. Hamlin) would vote against the second reading.

Mr. W. J. HURST was really surprised to hear the honorable member say he would oppose this Bill, when he had himself, only a few nights previously, introduced a Bill to interfere in a trust granted to the School Commissioners of Auck-

land. What sort of consistency was that? This was a subject in which the honorable member for Newton and he (Mr. Hurst) had taken a very great deal of interest a few years ago. He knew no question of greater importance than this. Now that education had been made a colonial matter these local provincial jealousies relative to trusts should be allowed to drop. He knew of a large and valuable trust which for the past ten years had been so mismanaged as to have become a perfect nuisance to the whole of the district in which it existed, and had almost fallen into private hands; and he knew of three other trusts every one of which had failed to carry out the purpose for which they had been instituted. The adoption of a system of colonial education had morally extinguished these trusts, and it was a matter to which the Government might very properly direct their attention. He knew, at any rate, that the Attorney-General had every desire to deal with these trusts, because, when he (Mr. Hurst) was connected with the Provincial Executive years ago, he became aware that that gentleman was desirous of dealing with them. It was a very important matter, and he hoped that, instead of being dealt with piecemeal, it would be dealt with as a whole.

Mr. BRYCE said he intended to vote for the Bill, and for the very good reason that he knew the trust had not been properly fulfilled. Objection had been taken that such a question should not be dealt with piecemeal; but he could not see the force of the objection. It was possible that some of the trusts had been faithfully performed, and it would be impossible, therefore, to deal with the question generally. It was the duty of the House to deal with the matter piecemeal, and to remodel trusts which had been grossly neglected, and place them under better management. One honorable gentleman had said that if this Bill were carried it would be introducing the thin edge of the wedge, and that we should have other members coming down and seeking to abolish trusts. Well, if it could be shown that other trusts had been neglected as this had been, then it was to the public interest, and not to the public harm, that these trusts should be abolished. Then it had been said that this Bill should be treated as a private Bill, in order that the trustees might have a knowledge of it, and that they might have an opportunity of defending themselves, which they had not at present; but he thought that the manner in which the honorable member for Nelson City and the honorable member for Avon had taken the matter up showed that they were ready, on this and every occasion, to defend the trustees. The honorable member for Parnell and the honorable member for Napier opposed the Bill because only one-third of the children were to be admitted free; but, if those gentlemen had been acquainted with the previous history of the school, they would have known that practically no children had hitherto been admitted free—that it had been a school for the instruction of children of the well-to-do classes, and that the trust in that respect had been totally set aside. If those honorable gentlemen gave their vote in accordance with

their reasons, they would vote for the second reading of the Bill. He should support it, and should do his utmost to get it passed.

Mr. ANDREWS should support the second reading of the Bill, but should endeavour, in Committee, to change many features of which he did not approve. These trusts opened up very large considerations and difficulties, but he thought the proper course would be that they should revert to the Crown, and be placed wholly under the educational system of the colony. He quite approved of introducing the thin end of the wedge for this purpose, and hoped that before long the wedge would be driven completely home. The lands were granted in trust for the benefit of the people at large, and he was very much surprised to see trustees endeavouring to hold on to the trust as against a proposal to turn the trust to good account. His experience of irresponsible trusts had been that they were a great nuisance, and he was always glad to get rid of them. He hoped the second reading would be agreed to, and the Bill passed in such a shape as would render the property conducive to the interests of the education of the people at large.

Mr. BOWEN thought it very probable that a great number of persons were in the same position as himself, and felt that they had not sufficient information to enable them to deal with the matter conscientiously. When he was dealing with a trust, he should do so in a judicial spirit, and should only vote for interference with the trust on full conviction that the trust had been abused and not properly carried out. He would go this far with his honorable friend the Native Minister: that a question of this sort should not be dealt with generally, but that each trust should be dealt with on its merits. He quite agreed that the State had a right to interfere where a trust had not been properly administered; but he would never agree to a general interference or sweeping away of trusts, with a view to bringing everything down to a dull uniformity throughout the country. In this case, though not in the House during the early part of the debate, he understood the mover was willing to let the Bill go to a Select Committee, and that that Select Committee should take evidence as to the manner in which the trust had been administered. If that were so, he would vote for the second reading, reserving to himself the right to vote against the Bill at a subsequent stage, if he did not think the allegations justified. That was the only reasonable course that could be taken. He knew enough of this matter to think that a *prima facie* case for inquiry had been made out. He believed there had been neglect in administering the trust at one time, but he did not know whether that had continued: he understood that recently there had been a great improvement. The question for the Committee would be whether there had been such an abuse of the trust as would justify the interference of the State.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE said that, so far as his memory served him, this Bill was very similar to that introduced by Sir Julius Vogel and Mr. Bryce three or four years ago; and he, with the

honorable member for Nelson City, was strongly of opinion that the trust should not be interfered with in a special way. His opinion with regard to educational trusts and reserves was, that there should be no reserves for secondary or higher education, because it appeared to him that the duty of the State ceased when it provided primary education. There were a great many trusts similar to that under discussion—there was one at Napier and one at Nelson; and honorable members who had local knowledge would admit that to some extent these trusts were mismanaged; but he had not seen any evidence brought forward that this trust, even if it had not been so successful as was anticipated, had been mismanaged. What was the proposal? That the trust property should be taken from the destitute people of New Zealand, and given to the people of Wanganui. He presumed the people of New Zealand had more right to the land than had the people of Wanganui, and therefore he should have preferred the Bill had it proposed to take the endowment and make it an endowment to provide scholarships for boys from the primary schools of the colony, or for some such purpose. He did not think they could benefit the destitute people by passing the Bill before them: indeed, his opinion was, that the reason why the trust had not been so successful was that there are no destitute people in the colony, Her Majesty's subjects or any other subjects, and that the great difficulty the trustees had was that they could not get any children to attend the school. He knew a case in which it was impossible to get children to attend school, because there were so many free schools in the district, and because there were no destitute children to be found. If they were to take this endowment, let it be applied to some general purpose, and not for the purpose of establishing a high school at Wanganui. It was a remarkable thing that many honorable members had changed their minds on this subject since it was last before the House. Many honorable members who voted against the Bill three years ago were now in favour of this Bill—for instance, the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan), the honorable member for Port Chalmers, and several others; but he supposed they had their reasons. He himself, indeed, found himself in rather a peculiar position, because, whereas he spoke strongly in favour of the Bill, he had voted against it; but the reason he did so was, that he was informed that other religious bodies had had endowments given to them similar to this, and had sold them, and that therefore it was unfair for this House to come down upon the only body which had attempted to carry out its trust. That statement was borne out by Sir George Grey, who said it was a part of his grand scheme that these trusts should be for the benefit of the children of destitute people of the Pacific, and for their religious instruction. If, then, the Roman Catholics and the Wesleyans had disposed of the properties given to them in trust and turned them into money, it seemed hard that the only persons in New Zealand who had endeavoured to carry out the trust should be set upon by the House and

Mr. Hursthouse

have their trust taken from them. He should vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON moved the adjournment of the debate. Like the honorable member for Kaiapoi, he could not be satisfied that he was doing right in voting for the second reading of the Bill, because no pledge had been given as regarded the Select Committee. He thought the Committee should be appointed to inquire, first of all; and then, if it was reported that the trust had not been properly carried out, the House would be in a position to say what should be done with regard to this Bill. It must be admitted, by all honorable members who had read the Bill carefully, that some very large questions were involved in it. In fact, it struck at the very root of the present educational system. By the 3rd clause of the Bill they were going to institute the nominee Board system again. They found the whole circumstances of the trust altered—so much so that, while the trust originally said that the whole of the scholars attending the school should be taught free, it was now proposed to take away that benefit from two-thirds of the scholars, and the remaining third would not get much benefit from the school, judging by what had taken place in other parts of the colony. Their secondary system of education under the Act was not correct. They had no trusts for high-class education. They found that an attempt had been made by gentlemen acting on the Boards to introduce higher subjects, which were never contemplated by the House for the masses of the people. He thought it was only fair to himself and other young members that they should have more information. He would move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SPEIGHT hoped the honorable member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance) would give them an assurance that the Bill would be sent to a Committee.

Mr. SEDDON would withdraw his motion for adjournment on the understanding that the Bill be referred to a Committee.

Mr. BALLANCE, in reply, said that the objections taken were merely to the details of the Bill, which he had reserved for Committee. He assured them that he only adhered to the one principle which he laid down in moving the second reading—that of local management. So far as any other detail was concerned, the question was quite open. He was prepared to receive any amendment which might be made in Committee and to accept the voice of the Committee upon it. With regard to the first subsection of clause 31, which provided that one-third of the resident and day scholars should be admitted free, he thought the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) had entirely misconceived its character. At the present time all the scholars receiving education in the school had to pay high fees. It was in order to provide free education for a certain number that this clause had been put in. The clause did not limit the number who should receive free education to one-third. The meaning of the clause was, that at least one-third should receive free education. The word "only" was not in the clause. However, he was prepared

to rely on the trust itself, and have this clause eliminated from the Bill. With regard to the nominee Board, he agreed with the honorable member for Christchurch City that there should, perhaps, be a sprinkling of the elective element in it, and he was quite willing to meet the views of the House on that subject. The Minister of Lands appeared to think it altogether inconsistent that he (Mr. Ballance) should have advocated higher education, when the trust itself provided for the education of the poor. He did not accept that position at all. His opinion was, that higher education should be provided for the poor, that every person should have access to the higher schools of the colony, and that higher schools should not be maintained for the rich alone. If they confined the trust to that purpose, and made it available for the education of poor children in the higher branches of education, they would be doing a work very much required indeed.

Bill read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.

LYTTELTON HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT, in moving the second reading of this Bill, would inform honorable members that its object was simply to empower the Lyttelton Borough Council and the Lyttelton Harbour Board to exchange certain land for the purpose of defining the boundary-line between the properties of those two bodies. The matter had been arranged between these local bodies, and the boundary-line agreed to by them.

Mr. HUTCHISON wished to know whether this Bill should not be considered a private one, inasmuch as it contained a clause—the 4th clause—similar to a provision contained in a measure which he had himself introduced relating to compensation, and which was dealt with as a private Bill. If the rights of private persons were interfered with in any way by it, he presumed it should be considered a private Bill.

Mr. HALL said, if the honorable gentleman was acquainted with the circumstances, he would not for a moment suppose that this was a private Bill. In many public Bills the rights of private individuals might be affected in a manner that would entitle them to compensation from the public purse, and the Public Works Act provided the way in which such compensation should be paid. The object sought to be attained by this Bill was one which had been agreed upon between the Lyttelton Borough Council and the Lyttelton Harbour Board. Owing to certain reclamation works, the original line of high-water mark could in many places not now be ascertained, and therefore the boundary-line between the property belonging to these two bodies respectively had become indistinct. It had been arranged that a new boundary-line should be laid down, the property on one side of which should belong to the Borough Council, and the property on the other side to the Harbour Board. It was a matter between those two local bodies, yet one in which the public at large was also interested. The proposed arrangement might possibly interfere with proprietary rights of individuals. Access

to properties might be rendered less convenient than hitherto; and in that case fit compensation was provided. The Bill had been very carefully considered. It had been under the notice of the Government, and the Public Works Department had approved of it as a very useful measure. He thought the House might safely give its assent to the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHISON did not oppose the Bill, and was satisfied with the information given. He merely wished to ascertain whether it was a public Bill or a private Bill. It contained a clause similar to the one which was in the Te Aro Reclamation Bill, which he had charge of, and which was made a private Bill.

Bill read a second time.

AUCKLAND TURNPIKE BILL.

Mr. HAMLIN moved the second reading of this Bill.

Major ATKINSON said the honorable gentleman could hardly expect the House to pass the second reading of such an important Bill as this without a word of explanation. He trusted the honorable gentleman would give the House some information upon it.

Mr. HAMLIN said the Bill itself clearly showed its purport. He might state that he was acting in accordance with the wishes of the County Council. He had before him certain resolutions which had been sent to the Government, requesting that the object aimed at by this Bill should be carried out. The amount of tolls collected at the Tamaki Bridge, and the Otahuhu and Slippery Creek toll-bars, from the 1st April, 1878, to the 31st March, 1879, was £359 5s. 5d. The wages and other charges amounted to £214 8s., leaving a balance of £144 17s. 5d. Nearly the whole of the receipts were absorbed in keeping one or two individuals employed. He was only carrying out the request of the people most interested in bringing forward this Bill.

Major ATKINSON did not know why the honorable gentleman should come to this House and ask for power to abolish these tolls. He understood the County Council could abolish the toll-bars. The honorable gentleman should have given some reasons why the House should be asked to legislate on this matter. If the toll-gates were being maintained at a loss, that was a matter for the County Council to deal with. They did not know whether the Bill would affect any other toll-gates. He had not had time to look up the matter to see whether the Auckland Turnpike Acts of 1866 included any other cases. He should like to know why the honorable gentleman had come to this House instead of going to the County Council.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE said that something appertaining to this Bill had been before the Public Petitions Committee last session, on a petition from a number of residents of a certain district in Auckland. His memory was clear upon this point: that there was a certain road between Auckland and Onehunga, which was not a county road, or a road belonging to any body in particular, and the General Government had till then been maintaining this road in a state of repair.

The Public Petitions Committee had refused to grant permission to abolish the toll-gate until some satisfactory arrangement was made with the County Council or other governing body as to who was to take charge of this Great South Road. The honorable member for Franklin might have given some definite information as to the meaning of this Bill. He was inclined to think that in this case "still waters run deep." There was a deal more in this Bill than the honorable member would lead the House to understand. He was sure his honorable friend the member for Newton could give the House some very valuable information as to what was intended by this Bill. He felt sure that, if the House passed this Bill, it would be called upon to provide the money for the maintenance of this road until it was decided to whom the road belonged. He understood it formed the boundary-line between two counties, and consequently it was not the property of either.

Mr. KELLY thought the debate ought to be adjourned to enable honorable members to ascertain exactly the object of this Bill, and how far it affected a particular county in the Provincial District of Auckland. The subject came before the Public Petitions Committee last session, and from inquiries made by the Committee it appeared that there were certain roads which were not under the County Councils or within Road Board districts, and on which tolls were collected. Since the passing of the Abolition of Provinces Act, the toll-gates on those roads were taken over by the General Government, and were still held by the Government. The tolls collected were the property of the General Government, and were expended on those roads. Should the toll-gates be abolished, the General Government would be held responsible for the maintenance of these roads, but would have no funds for that purpose. He thought some of the toll-gates ought to be abolished, because the revenue derived from them was of no practical value in maintaining the roads. The toll-bar on the road between Auckland and Onehunga was in a different position, inasmuch as there was a substantial revenue derived from it. He thought that source of revenue should not be taken away without some other provision being made for maintaining the road. The revenue of the colony could not be applied to the maintenance of local roads in the part of the country which this Bill referred to without opening up the question of making like expenditure in all parts of the colony on main roads.

Mr. TOLE said his object in rising was simply to say this: that he assumed the purpose which the honorable member for Franklin had in view was to abolish turnpikes on the public roads in his district. The Colonial Treasurer asked why this could not be done under the Counties Act. The answer to that was, that the Counties Act was hung up in the Manukau County. There was ample power, without this Bill, to abolish tolls. In cases where the Counties Act was hung up the Minister for Public Works could exercise powers under section 117 of "The Public Works Act, 1876," which enabled him to abolish tolls. The power sought to be obtained by this Bill

could be fully exercised by the Minister for Public Works if he chose. He understood the honorable member wished to have these turnpikes abolished, which could be effected by the exercise of the powers so conferred; but he presumed the honorable member took this course as being a more expeditious way of doing it.

Motion for adjournment of the debate negatived.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that, the House having decided not to adjourn the debate, he would suggest the rejection of the Bill. He did so on this ground: that there was no information before the House at present to warrant the House in passing the Bill. It was usual to explain the principle of a Bill on the motion for the second reading. This had not been done. He gathered from a few minutes' conversation that the district within which these roads were situated was a county which had not brought the Counties Act into operation within its boundaries. Under the Counties Act, as soon as it was brought into operation the County Council could take over all roads and keep them in order. From that moment there was a body in existence which could, if it chose, act on behalf of the people. If it did not choose to take that position, the House ought not to relieve the district of its responsibilities. He was told that, by a curious manipulation, a Road Board had its boundary on each side of this road, thus placing the road between two jurisdictions. If the county were properly organized under the Act any difficulty could be got over by the County Council taking the road over. Until the people came forward and did their duty in the matter the House ought not to relieve them.

Mr. HALL thought the House was fairly entitled to some further information than it had yet obtained about the effect which this Bill would have. If the statement of the last speaker were correct, the road in question was not under the jurisdiction of any particular Road Board. If that were the case, and these turnpikes were abolished, he would like to ask, whence were the funds to come for the maintenance of the road? At present it was maintained, he supposed, to a great extent from the proceeds of these turnpikes. Was this road to be thrown on the colony at large, or to be maintained from some local source? The House was entitled to information on this point, before it was asked to read the Bill a second time. He did not wish to throw any unnecessary difficulty in the way of passing the Bill, but he thought that before it was read a second time—and a number of honorable members seemed determined to pass it—the House should have the information he now asked for, namely, whence were the funds for maintaining this road to come, if these turnpikes were abolished? Was the colony to provide the means, or was the money to be derived from a local source?

Mr. SIRIMSKI said that in reply to the Premier's question he would ask that honorable gentleman, where were the funds to come from for the maintenance of the road between Christchurch and Hokitika? That road cost the colony something like £10,000 a year, but nothing was said about that. Here was a road which was

not recognized by either county. The tolls which were collected from these turnpikes amounted to very little over and above the expenditure incurred for looking after the toll-bar, and the little that was gained was not sufficient for the maintenance of the road. He did not think the Government had any right to object in this matter, when there was a road elsewhere costing £10,000 a year, and not a word was said about it.

Mr. BOWEN said he should be quite satisfied if he were certain that the honorable gentleman knew anything about the Bill. But the difficulty had really arisen in consequence of the member who had charge of the Bill not saying a word about it on moving the second reading. He merely brought in the Bill and said, "Gentlemen, will you pass this Bill?" and then he sat down. When he was asked for some information, he said only a few words which nobody understood. He (Mr. Bowen) could not say whether it was a good or a bad Bill. He did not think it reasonable to call on the House to legislate in this way. It was not respectful to the House to throw a Bill down in this way, and they would make themselves perfect laughing-stocks if they passed a Bill without knowing anything about it. The honorable member said this Bill referred to one particular turnpike. As far as he could see on the face of it, the Bill did not refer to any one turnpike. They had heard something about these turnpikes before, and he knew, from something that happened in a Committee, that there was a difference of opinion amongst Auckland members about this matter. The Christchurch and Hokitika Road had nothing to do with the matter. The honorable gentleman (Mr. Shrimski) might object to that road being taken up as a national work; but it had been so taken up in order to keep communication open between the East and West Coasts. However, that was not the question at all.

Mr. HALL.—There is a turnpike on it.

Mr. BOWEN believed there was. This Bill dealt with a question that might be raised with regard to any county in the country. He hoped the House would pause before it passed the second reading of a Bill in this sudden and headlong manner.

Mr. MACANDREW suggested that the consideration of this Bill should be postponed for a week, in order that full information concerning it might be placed before the House.

Major HARRIS said that in the District of Franklin there were two toll-gates. By paying at one, persons got free through the other. The amount of tolls collected at the two gates from the 1st April, 1878, to the 31st March, 1879, was £229 18s. 11d., and the charges were £185 17s., leaving a balance of £106 1s. 11d. That sum of £106 was hardly of any account in keeping the road in repair. The ratepayers were willing that the toll-gate should be removed, and that the maintenance of the roads should be made a charge on the county. They had previously paid £500 for the repair of a bridge in the county, and that money was taken out of the county grant. He felt confident honorable members would agree that where it was necessary to pay

£200 in order to collect a sum of £300 it was not worth while to maintain a toll. Therefore he thought it would be advisable to abolish the toll-gates altogether. The Highway Boards in the Eden County would be willing to keep the roads in repair. The County Council of Manukau had determined not to bring the Counties Act into force. When complaint about the toll-gates was made to the Government, representatives were invited to go to Auckland to consult with the Colonial Secretary on the matter. That gentleman politely told them that he wished to get a sum of £500 to repair a certain bridge, and he gave them to understand that it was only through courtesy that he had invited them, and that, if they said, "No, we will not give the money," he would stop it and pay the sum as though they were quite satisfied. They gave way to the honorable gentleman courteously, because they could not do anything else. He repeated that it was absurd to pay away such large sums of money in the county for the collection of a sum which was not worth collecting; and when the ratepayers showed a disposition to help themselves and allow the money to be stopped from their county revenue he thought the Government ought to meet them half-way, and not force a system upon them which they despised.

Mr. SEDDON intended to vote for the second reading of this Bill. The sooner the House got rid of this method of maintaining roads the better. In the other colonies they were abolishing toll-gates as an iniquitous system. It was an iniquitous system, because the cost of collection was about 50 per cent., and, that being so, the sooner it was done away with the better. With regard to the particular case before the House, it seemed to be met by a subsection of the 93rd clause of the Public Works Act, which says, "If the whole of the Counties Act is not in force in any county, the words 'County Council,' in the three preceding subsections, shall be taken to mean the Minister." The Minister for Public Works therefore, in certain cases, had power to abolish these toll-gates if he thought it advisable; but, seeing that he would be placed in rather an invidious position—because, if he abolished toll-gates, he would be asked directly for a vote to maintain the roads—he would, very wisely, refrain from exercising the prerogative given to him under this clause until the House had expressed its approval. With regard to the Turnpike Acts mentioned by the honorable member in charge of the Bill, it would be found, on reference to the Schedule attached to the Public Works Act, that "The Turnpike Act, 1866," and "The Turnpike Act 1866 Amendment Act, 1866," were repealed. So that, as far as the 4th clause of the Bill was concerned, the provision it contained for the repeal of previous Acts was not necessary. He thought it would be seen from the figures that had been quoted that it was absolutely necessary that this matter should be dealt with, and that the sooner they laid down a precedent the better. He would point out, as a further instance of the inconvenience of the system, that it sometimes happened that, where there were two local bodies, the revenue from a toll-gate had to go to the nearest county, which

having the shortest road to maintain, would not remove the toll-gate but would still keep taxing the other county. Under these circumstances, he thought it was time that all the toll-gates throughout the colony were abolished; and if the honorable member had brought in a Bill with that object, it would have had his support, and, he believed, that of a majority of the House.

Mr. LUNDON thought the honorable member who moved the second reading of this Bill was to blame for not having given some explanation with regard to it. When the toll-gates were instituted in Auckland it was only done by the Provincial Council as a temporary measure, failing a sufficient revenue for the purpose from other sources. The County of Manukau was, next to Eden, the richest in the Province of Auckland; and it was owing to its action in refusing to bring the Counties Act into operation that the toll-bars had not been abolished. The toll-bar at Newmarket was almost entirely kept up by the people of Onehunga—chiefly the market gardeners and the passengers in the omnibuses. The honorable member for Franklin (Major Harrie) had only given the figures for the Otahuhu and Slippery Creek toll-gates, which were in the honorable gentleman's own county, and he had not said anything about the toll-gates at Newmarket and on the North Road. The whole of them, in his (Mr. Lundon's) opinion, ought to be abolished, as they were not worth the revenue collected. At one time there was as much as £3,000 a year collected at the Newmarket toll-gate, but now the amount had decreased to about £800 or £900, which, as he said before, was almost entirely collected from the poor people in the Town of Onehunga, who had, besides, three miles of road to maintain from their own boundary to the wharf. If the House was wise, it would do away with toll-bars altogether. It was a miserable way of collecting revenue, and, as far as Auckland was concerned, was only resorted to as a temporary expedient. He had not intended to speak, and only rose to say a word on behalf of the district in which he was interested. He hoped the Bill would be read a second time.

Major ATKINSON said it would be altogether a waste of time to proceed any further in this matter. There was no doubt, as the honorable member for Hokitika had pointed out, that no such Acts as those sought to be repealed were in existence: they were repealed in the Public Works Act of 1876. There might be some other Acts, but they were not in Curmin's Index, nor could he find them anywhere else. If there were gates such as the honorable gentleman described, which cost more to keep up than the revenue returned from them, the matter would be immediately altered if the honorable gentleman would go to the Government about it. There could be no possible object in wasting money like that. There was power, under the 117th section of the Public Works Act, for the County Council, where the county was in full operation, to deal with the toll-gates; and in the Counties Act Amendment Act it was provided that, where the county was not in full operation, the Governor, by Order in Council, could deal with

the matter. He would suggest that the honorable members for Franklin should see the Government next day; and if they could make out a case, action would be taken. But, having given this power to the counties, it would be very unreasonable for them to deal with the matter in the summary way proposed, without any of the counties in such a large district as Auckland having a voice in the matter. He was himself very much opposed to turnpikes. As a rule they were a very expensive means of collecting revenue. But it seemed to him that, having relegated this question to the local bodies, they should leave it to the discretion of those bodies to decide whether, under their particular circumstances, it was or was not desirable that the toll-gates should be continued. He trusted the honorable gentleman would withdraw the Bill, because, if passed, it would be absolutely inoperative.

Mr. HAMLIN, in reply, said the statement which had just been quoted happened to have come from the Colonial Secretary's office. He was speaking from facts which had been supplied to the County Council in reply to their request to have the tolls abolished. The Colonial Secretary replied, stating it could not be done, and consequently this Bill had been introduced with the sole object of abolishing all toll-gates in the Provincial District of Auckland. Manukau and Eden were the only two counties affected by the tolls. The statement he made a few minutes ago referred to three gates—namely, Otahuhu, Slippery Creek, and Tamaki Bridge. With reference to the amount paid at the Newmarket and other toll-gates, he felt sure that when the return he had that day asked for was laid on the table it would be found that there was a great discrepancy as to the amount. He had thought that before moving the second reading of the Bill it would be desirable to have the return, and that was why he had asked for it; and when he desired the House to consent to the second reading of the Bill to-night, it was with the intention of not proceeding with the committal until Tuesday week, by which time the return would no doubt be in the hands of honorable members, and they would be convinced that these tolls were simply a burden upon the people, and that no good was derived from them.

Bill read a second time.

IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT ABOLITION BILL.

Mr. HUTCHISON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that when he gave notice of its introduction, and thus became a law-reformer in a small way, he quite forgot that there were a number of legal gentlemen in the House, and he now began to be alarmed at his temerity. However, it was a very little Bill, and he did not think it would evoke much opposition even from the legal members of the House. Its principle was that of total abolition of imprisonment for debt. He did not intend to take up any strong ground against the principle of imprisonment for debt. That might or might not be a good principle; but he hardly thought it was a good principle, for he did not see any likelihood of a man

Mr. Seddon

making the money to pay his debts while he was kept in prison. But our forefathers held—they must have adopted it from the old Roman law—that if a man could not pay in purse he ought to pay in person. They went in for that very strongly. But the question was not whether imprisonment for debt was wise or not. There might be a difference of opinion on that point; but he thought there would be no difference of opinion upon this point: that, if there was to be imprisonment for debt, it ought to be of a general and not of a partial character; and what he now submitted was that, while they had got into the pleasant fiction of believing that imprisonment for debt had been abolished, practically it had not been so. There was a class of people who still suffered imprisonment for debt—so much so that there really was now one law for the big debtor and another for the little one, the result being that the latter got all the kicks and the former all the halfpence. They never heard now of a man being imprisoned for £50, £60, or £100—he went through the process of being “whitewashed,” without any serious consequence to himself; but the poor man who owed only a small sum of money, as every person who had to attend the Resident Magistrates’ Courts must know, had to suffer by a judgment summons. The number of these judgment summonses must be very great—so great that he thought at one time of moving for a return of the number issued throughout the colony; but his impression was, that there was now more imprisonment for debt than there was previous to the passing of the existing Act. At all events, he felt that this partial imprisonment for debt—this system whereby people who owed small sums of money were sent to prison, and people who owed large sums of money were never sent to prison—was an injustice. Then there was another fiction in connection with this matter, and that was this: that these unfortunate men were sent to gaol, not because they had not paid their debts, but because they had treated the Court with contempt. Any person who had read “*The Antiquary*” would remember that Sir Walter Scott had a very ingenious chapter upon that point, wherein he showed the mercy of the Scotch law. He showed how debtors were never sent to prison for debt, but His Majesty commanded a person to pay £50 or £60, as the case might be; and, if he did not pay it, he was charged with being disloyal, and had to go to gaol for his disloyalty. But he had to go to gaol all the same: and that was the case here. The object of this Bill was to abolish imprisonment for debt entirely. It had been pointed out to him that there was still something wanting in this Bill. He wished to compel every person to pay who was able to pay, or to make him suffer as a criminal; but there was an omission in the Bill, which of course would have to be rectified in Committee—there was no means of recovering penalties. He was willing to make the non-payment of legal penalties an offence, punishable by imprisonment. It had also been pointed out to him that possibly a debtor against whom a judgment summons had been issued might have means that could not be

attached under the provisions of the Bill. For instance, a debtor might have debts owing to him, or he might have money in the bank, and the bailiff could not reach these. In order not to make the Bill cumbrous or difficult to understand, he had endeavoured to meet this case in another way. The honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt) had introduced a couple of Bills to effect certain reforms, and the honorable gentleman had kindly consented to add to these Bills several clauses which would meet this defect. He had merely to say, in addition, that the Bill contained a saving clause—that was to say, that any judgment passed before this Bill came into operation should continue in force. His proposal, however, was, that after the 1st January, 1880, no individual should remain in prison for debt, pure and simple. There was one other object he had indirectly in view in this Bill, which was not brought out very clearly, and that was, that those small debts which usually led to the issue of judgment summonses should, in point of fact, be treated as debts of honor. It was much better that a poor man should buy only as far as he could pay, and that the credit system for small sums should cease to a large extent. It was an equivocal system for the buyer as well as for the seller; and if a grocer or other tradesman, knowing a man’s circumstances, chose to give him credit, he should have to trust to the man’s honor to pay. In nearly all cases a man would pay if he possibly could; and, if he failed, the tradesman ought not to have the right to drag him before the Court. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HALL, without committing himself entirely to the Bill as it now stood, would vote for its second reading. The subject would require careful consideration before the measure was passed, as there were one or two classes of cases not provided for in it which practically amounted to dishonesty on the part of a debtor, and which should not go unpunished. It would also be necessary to make provision for the recovery of penalties.

Mr. STEWART said the Bill did not provide for the case of persons who were about to leave the colony without finding security for the payment of their debts. The existing law was very hazy upon that point, and it would be well for the honorable gentleman to consider it. He quite agreed with the spirit of the Bill. No doubt the operation of the recent Act had been to drive into gaol a large number of very small debtors, who were quite unable to pay their debts; and it simply resulted in depriving them of power to find means for the support of their wives and children, without securing any corresponding benefit to the creditor. The theory of the present law was, that a person was not put into gaol unless after judgment was recovered, and when he, having means, neglected to satisfy that judgment. In other words, he was imprisoned for misappropriating money which belonged to his creditors. Therefore, although it was called imprisonment for debt, it was really punishment of the debtor for fraud committed on the creditor by not paying when he had the means of paying. He quite

agreed with the Premier that this Bill would require some consideration before it was passed in its present form, and the House ought not to drift from one position into a totally different one without careful consideration.

Mr. READER WOOD could recollect that when, some years ago, Mr. Gillies introduced a Bill for the abolition of imprisonment for debt, precisely the same arguments were used as those which his honorable friend who had just sat down brought forward. It was said to be an extremely bold measure, and that there were a great many points to be considered which were not provided for in the Bill. The consequence was, that the Bill was knocked about amongst the lawyers until, instead of being a very short and simple measure, as it was introduced, it became very long and involved, so that now it was necessary to introduce another Bill to repeal it, in almost the same shape as the Bill which Mr. Gillies first introduced. The simpler a Bill of this kind was, the better; for he did not see under what pretence the Legislature should imprison a man for owing money to another. The honorable gentleman spoke quite truly when he said that if you put a man into gaol you prevent him from paying his debt and providing for those dependent on him. This system of credit was really nothing more than a mercantile transaction. A man gave another credit, not because that other was a poor man, but because it suited his own business to run the risk. Then, when he found that he had made a mistake, and could not get his money back, he ran to the Legislature and cried, "I have not read this man's character properly. I have made a mistake. I thought he would pay me, and he will not. Punish him. Put him in gaol." That was what was at the bottom of all this credit system. The tradesman gave credit because he could hold it *in terrorem* over his customer's head that he had power to put him in gaol if he did not pay. He contended that from beginning to end it was purely a matter of trade and bargain, and there would be very much less of this excessive credit if the creditor had no such power over the debtor. The Legislature had nothing whatever to do with this matter. It was a mercantile transaction between one man and another, and the sooner they were rid of it in every form the better.

Mr. BARRON said that not only did he think the honorable gentleman who had introduced this Bill had initiated an excellent measure, but he would like to see the honorable gentleman commit himself a little further in the direction of abolishing legislation between debtor and creditor except in cases of fraud. It would tend to increase the self-respect of people if such legislation were abolished, and be a saving of money to the State. Honorable members knew there were many engagements entered into on the Stock Exchange and on the turf which the law refused to enforce, and yet those engagements were honorably met. Any default was much rarer than in ordinary commercial transactions protected by the law.

Mr. MURRAY thought the Bill went quite sufficiently far, and he did not think it should be encumbered with extraneous matter. As the

honorable gentleman had been so successful in introducing this useful measure, he trusted he would not stay his hand, but would deal with the whole of the bankruptcy laws. It was, perhaps, too late to do so this session, but he would recommend the matter to the honorable gentleman's attention. He looked upon this Bill as a supplement to the great liberal measures they had been talking about so much, and he was glad the House was about to get rid of the iniquitous laws from the Statute Book under which a man could be held in slavery simply because he was poor. This Bill he took to be a declaration that the merchant should trust to the good faith and honor of his customer, and it would tend to prevent a great deal of that species of credit which now so largely existed.

Mr. HISLOP hoped the honorable gentleman would be satisfied with passing the first three clauses of his Bill in Committee, as they would be quite sufficient for his purpose. If the honorable gentleman was satisfied with affirming the principle that there should be no imprisonment for debt, he would be doing a good thing; but when he commenced in a Bill of this kind to deal with fraud, with false pretences, and with default in regard to fiduciary property, he introduced subjects each of which would almost require a separate measure to deal with it. He could not agree with the doctrine that matters of offence which arose out of misdealing with property owned by a person owing money to another were not offences against the State. Any one who misdealt with property in that way committed an offence against the State just as much as many of those who committed crimes for which the law inflicted punishment, and deserved to be equally punished. He hoped, whatever Government was in power, they would take up the subjects dealt with in the three subsections of the 4th clause of this Bill, and introduce measures to prevent the gross frauds that had hitherto been going on in the colony. With regard to imprisonment for debt, it must be remembered that there were measures on the Statute Book already which relieved the debtor from his burden if he was brought into the position in which he found himself without dishonesty on his part. He could get himself discharged from his debts, and very cheaply too. If they were to continue the Small Debts Court, and protect the people from being cheated in a gross manner by their debtors, the Government should itself take the matter into consideration, and have better legislation placed on the Statute Book than had hitherto existed.

Mr. HUTCHISON, in reply, said he was exceedingly grateful to honorable members for the manner in which they had received this Bill. The honorable member for Waitemata had stated better than he could do the absolute necessity for passing a measure which would simply enact that imprisonment for debt was to cease; because the Act of 1874 was a complete illustration of the failure of an attempt employing many words to convey its meaning. That Act was inordinately elaborate—so elaborate that it was difficult to say what it meant; but, whatever it

meant, a great deal of oppression had been committed under it in many instances. He should be very happy to receive amendments; but he should endeavour, if possible, to keep to a bald measure. Of course, if the Government thought they could introduce Bills this session to deal with the various matters included in the subsections to the 3rd clause, he had no objection to cut these subsections out; but until that was done it was desirable to provide some punishment for persons who may deal loosely with money. As to the 3rd subsection, he thought there was a necessity for it. He knew of cases of parties who were trustees in bankruptcy, and who got money in their hands belonging to the creditors, and it seemed impossible for the creditors to get the money. There was another point he had not mentioned, but which was entirely against imprisonment for debt as it at present existed. Under the old system, if a man had a debtor imprisoned he was bound to keep him while in prison; but that burden was now thrust upon the State, and, moreover, the State had no power to recoup itself by making the man labour. Consequently, any view that was taken showed that it was wrong to continue imprisonment for debt in its present state. While willing to accept amendments, he hoped his legal friends would make their suggestions as plain as possible.

Bill read a second time.

MINES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. REEVES, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said its only object was to remedy an omission which had been found to exist in the Mines Act, in order to give companies which had laid out large sums of money to develop their ground protection for a certain time.

Mr. HALL said unfortunately the Minister of Mines was not present, but, understanding the Bill was to go before the Gold Fields Committee, he had no objection to the second reading. He wished it to be understood, however, that the Government were not committed by allowing the second reading to be taken.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR said he should make no objection to the Bill in its present stage, but he confessed he viewed such a measure with some jealousy, because, as it was framed, it gave large powers for what was called locking up ground for a long period of time. At the same time, it could not but be recognized that companies or holders who had laid out large sums of money in mining enterprise should be entitled to some consideration; and it was a fair matter for consideration whether the present law gave sufficient inducements. It seemed to him that any measure of this kind must be watched with great jealousy by the House, because, undoubtedly, unless it was carefully guarded, speculators who had failed in their enterprises might lock up land for a long period, in the hope of letting the land to people who would be willing to work it. However, it would come before the Gold Fields Committee, and as the Committee would have the advantage of the advice of many members new to the House of large experience, beyond stating

it must be watched jealously, he would not urge any objection against the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

LICENSING BILL.

Mr. SAUNDERS, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he could not do so without a reference to a late member of the House who had taken such a great interest in all social reforms of this kind, and had devoted so much energy and ability to improve the condition of his fellow-settlers. Indeed, had Sir W. Fox continued a member of the House he should have felt it to be presumptuous to take such a matter out of his hands, although, at the same time, he had never been able to entirely agree with the view he had taken on this matter. The Bill that he now proposed was very similar to one which he believed had been prepared by Mr. Stout, and which was circulated to some extent before the beginning of last session of Parliament. He had made several alterations in that Bill as it was drawn up by Mr. Stout, which he would notice as he went along. In the meantime, he might say that he claimed very little originality himself in regard to the Bill; and the great feature in the Bill which he valued, and which he thought was in itself worthy of a great deal of the attention of the House, was the provision that rate-payers in any particular district should have an opportunity of saying whether the number of licenses should or should not be increased during the next three years. That was the part of the Bill which he hoped would be sanctioned very generally by the House, from which he expected most good to the country, and it was the only one upon which he felt inclined to insist. With regard to the division of districts, it would be seen that in clause 5 provision was made by which—

“The licensing districts for all purposes of the licensing laws shall henceforth be identical and conterminous respectively with existing and future (1) boroughs, (2) wards of boroughs, (3) ridings of counties, (4) road districts outside counties, (5) such other districts, in parts of the colony not comprised within any of the foregoing, which the Governor in Council is hereby authorized to constitute, and to vary, abolish, and reconstitute from time to time, as may seem fitting.”

That was one feature which would provide machinery for making the districts smaller, and, so far, give a better opportunity to the different districts to decide what they pleased with regard to the increase of licenses in the neighbourhood. Clause 7 provided one important thing, which he thought would lessen the labour and anxiety which persons had to undergo who wished to prevent the granting of licenses. It provided,—

“From and after the commencement of this Act, a publican's license for any premises that have not been previously licensed shall be granted only at the quarterly licensing meetings to be held in the month of June in each year.”

If this were agreed to, those who wished to prevent licenses being granted would not be

obliged to keep constantly on the look-out every quarter. The following two clauses provided,—

"From and after the commencement of this Act no new publicans' licenses, except for premises in respect of which a license is held and is in force at the aforesaid time, shall be granted until the ratepayers of the district shall have previously determined, in manner hereinafter provided, whether the number of publicans' licenses within the district may or may not be increased.

"The Chairman of the Licensing Court of every licensing district wherein a ratepayers' roll, as herein defined, is in force shall, by public advertisement, appoint some convenient day in the month of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty, and thereafter at the same time in every third year, but not earlier than fourteen days after the first publication of the aforesaid advertisement, for taking the aforesaid determination of the ratepayers by a poll to be taken in manner prescribed in 'The Regulation of Local Elections Act, 1876,' which, for this purpose, is hereby incorporated with this Act."

That gave power to a majority of the ratepayers in a district to say whether there should or should not be any more licenses granted during the next three years. That was what he considered the important provision of the Bill. It practically introduced the principle of local option—that was, not for the prevention of the renewal of licenses, but for the prevention of an increase in the number of licenses, and giving power to a majority of the ratepayers in the district to do so. Clause 17 provided,—

"Notwithstanding anything in the licensing laws contained, the Licensing Court shall, at every licensing meeting, entertain any petition or memorial from the residents or ratepayers of the licensing district having reference to the granting or renewal of a license, on proof of the authenticity of the signatures thereto; and, if it shall appear to the Court that a majority of at least two-thirds of the residents or ratepayers in the neighbourhood of the house in respect of which a license is sought, or to which it relates, object to the granting of the application, such Licensing Court shall refuse to grant such application."

Now, it had been suggested that two-thirds of the residents of a district might be required to prevent the renewal of a license, and that half should be enough to prevent the granting of new licenses. He thought that would be undesirable, even in the interests of the temperance cause, as it would certainly lead the ratepayers to take less interest in the triennial vote if the same majority could do the same thing at any other time; and for that reason he did not think it desirable to give fewer than two-thirds the power to refuse licenses, except at the time it was proposed to do it regularly by ballot. Now they came to that important and difficult question of compensation. In his hurry to get the Bill before the House as soon as possible, he had rather carelessly allowed clause 20 to express more than he intended in regard to the subject; therefore in Committee he would ask to be allowed to alter clause 20 by

inserting, in the fourth line, after "all," the word "actually," and then between the words "sustain" and "by," in the same line, to insert these words: "through depreciation in value of any licensed freehold or leasehold in their possession or occupation." This would guard the compensation from being anything more than compensation for outlay incurred on the security and in consequence of the permission at present given by the law to those who incurred that outlay. He wished the House distinctly to understand that the compensation he would support in this matter was just that amount that would reimburse an hotelkeeper for any outlay he had incurred in consequence of the state of the law that induced him to incur that outlay. He did not want to give compensation to a man for any loss of profits that he might sustain in consequence of not being allowed to carry on a traffic which the majority of his neighbours might consider injurious to their interests. He thought that no man had any right to do that, and therefore a man had no right to claim compensation for not being allowed to do it; but, whether his trade was injurious or not, he had a right to be protected for any outlay he might incur on the faith of an existing law. He wished to draw the distinction there, because it was a distinction which should exist. On the one hand he had succeeded in offending the licensed victuallers by not granting more than that, and he had also managed to offend a great many of the teetotallers by proposing that there should be so much as that; but to him it appeared perfectly clear that, if they granted by law power to any man to incur an outlay, and he incurred that outlay in the faith that the law would protect him and that he would receive the benefit of that outlay, he was entitled to compensation when they so altered the law as to take it away from him. He believed every member of the House had had a pamphlet put into his hands signed "Mungo," written, he understood, by Mr. Jago. Although that pamphlet went very largely into one part of the subject, it appeared to him that it did not in any way touch the real point in question. It showed very distinctly what no one ever doubted, that the publican at present was liable to lose his license for various causes, and that he had no security that the license would be continued to him. With regard to the security, he thoroughly admitted, as all must admit, that there were several circumstances at present which might cause a man to lose his license; but he did not admit that a license was virtually granted from year to year. For all practical purposes, a man was quite justified in expecting, when he took a license, that that license would be continued to him during good behaviour. So long as he fulfilled the conditions that the law required of him, he had a right to expect that the license would be continued to him; otherwise they would not see, as they frequently did at present, persons incurring very large outlay for the carrying on of such traffic. If it were understood that a man would not be likely to have his license renewed, no one would incur an outlay of that kind. In the interests of temperance alone, without any regard

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to the interests of the publican, or any considerations of justice, it was most undesirable to do anything to lessen the confidence of people in an outlay of that kind, because he found that the greatest amount of mischief was done, not by houses on which the greatest outlay was incurred—large hotels which made ample provision for the accommodation of travellers—but by those houses which did not make any considerable outlay, and were, in fact, mere drinking-shops. Therefore, in the interests of temperance, he thought they should not do anything which would increase the number of houses which sold drink and did nothing else in the way of providing accommodation for travellers. Mr. Jago, in his pamphlet, had entirely failed to notice the real facts of the case and the real object under discussion with regard to compensation to the publicans. It was quite true, as he said, that the publican was liable, for various reasons, to lose his license; but he (Mr. Saunders), notwithstanding that, held that they had no right to introduce an entirely new and unforeseen element of risk and uncertainty, which was no part of the publican's agreement. He looked at it in this way: As was frequently done, they might let a piece of land to a man for one life. He had a right to occupy that land during the continuance of that particular life. He had the risk to run that that life might drop at any time; but he had probably calculated the value of that life and incurred a large expenditure on the land on the faith of that life. Having done that, although the man had no security for his outlay—although it was quite true the property might revert to the owner at any time, with all its improvements and to the ruin of the lessee, it would only do so on the terms he had agreed upon himself; but the proprietor would have no right to introduce another life and say to the tenant, "You shall lose your property at the termination of either of those lives." That was exactly the alteration he would make in regard to the introduction of the local option principle. It was quite true that the publican might lose his license under existing circumstances, but they should not introduce an entirely new element which the publican could not reasonably calculate upon at the time he incurred his outlay on the security of his license. That was the ground upon which he would say they were called upon to compensate the publican for the outlay he had incurred under security of the existing law. He did not think they were called upon to compensate him for the non-continuance of a traffic which the majority of his neighbours considered in their interests should be suspended. That was the position he took up in regard to compensation, and he hoped it was one which the House would consider fair and reasonable. Having said this much with regard to compensation, he had no fixed opinion as to the particular words used in the Bill. Very likely the wording might not be satisfactory to honorable members. With eleven lawyers in the House the Bill would not be likely to suffer from want of attention in that direction. He should put himself in a very humble position, and be quite prepared to take any instruction or information given him by those

more able to deal with the subject. With regard to the latter part of the general provisions of the Bill, he thought there were some provisions made by the honorable member for Nelson City that were more complete, and preferable to his. He should be glad to incorporate them in his Bill, or to put the two Bills together in such a way as would best provide for the general efficiency of the measure. He might say, however, that there were some provisions in that Bill which he should be exceedingly sorry to see introduced into this Bill. He referred especially to the provisions for selling liquor on Sunday. He should be exceedingly sorry to see those provisions introduced in this Bill. In those districts where liquor was not allowed to be sold on Sunday the result had been most satisfactory, and it was much more easy for the police to enforce the law under those circumstances than it would be under any partial sale of liquor on Sunday. He would go back and notice some alterations he had made from the Bill as originally introduced by Mr. Stout. The first important alteration he had made in the Bill was with regard to the voting-papers. The voting-papers, as originally provided by Mr. Stout, were worded, "I vote to affirm" a particular proposal. He thought it better to strike out that, and to put in, "I vote that the number of publicans' licenses in the district may be increased," or, "I vote that the number of publicans' licenses in the district may not be increased." He found that persons using the ballot-paper were certainly liable to mistake, and it was best to make matters of that kind as clear and as distinct as possible. Then with regard to the Sunday clauses as introduced by Mr. Stout, he had made this alteration: "For any offence against the provisions of this section, committed within twelve months after any conviction for an offence of a like nature, the aforesaid person shall be liable to double the aforesaid penalties, and, at the discretion of the Court, shall also be liable to forfeit his license." By Mr. Stout's Bill, the penalty was only £10, and there was no provision to increase the penalty in cases of a repetition of the offence. It was desirable that there should be an increase of fine for a repetition of the offence, and that there should be also the power of refusing to grant a license to a person who had several times been guilty of a breach of the law. He should listen with very great pleasure to any arguments that might be brought forward on both sides of the question. As he said before, the only thing he placed very much value upon was the power of the majority of the ratepayers in a district to declare by vote, once in three years, that there should be no further licenses granted in that neighbourhood for the next three years. In the course of his life he had seen districts in which no houses had been licensed for the sale of drink for a vast number of years. He always found that, so far from such districts having suffered in consequence of that, those districts were remarkable for the general prosperity, happiness, and contentment of the people. In fact, he knew one district in the Provincial District of Nelson where that had been the case for twenty years, and that district was celebrated during the whole

of that time for the remarkable contentment, prosperity, health, and general happiness of its inhabitants. He trusted that, whatever views honorable members might hold with regard to that point, they would see that it was very desirable that at least a majority of the inhabitants of a district should have the opportunity of saying whether a house for the sale of intoxicating liquors should be established amongst them or not. He only wished that it were possible for honorable members to think of this question as they would of an entirely new proposal. If, instead of a proposal that a house should be established for the sale of intoxicating drinks, to the effect of which they had become so hardened and indifferent, they were called upon to consider whether some foreigner should be allowed to establish houses for the sale of some other article which would have precisely the same physical, moral, and social effect as intoxicating drink, he thought they would say that a great deal less and not a great deal more than a majority of the inhabitants of a district should have the power of saying that such houses should not be established in the district. If they could only take the subject as something entirely new, and remove all their old prejudices, and consider really the evil itself and all its fearful effects upon every class of society, without the indifference that was engendered by habitual familiarity, they would say that it was one entitled to the most earnest consideration of this House, and one they would offer every possible facility to their fellow-settlers to remove from their districts. He should be happy to hear any objections brought forward against this Bill. He would be very tractable upon the subject, and would be prepared to make any alterations so long as they did not militate against the very important principle he contended for—namely, the power of the inhabitants to say that these licenses should not be granted without their consent.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at half-past twelve o'clock.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 23rd October, 1879.

Deferred-Payment Land—Wellington-Hutt Railway—University.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

DEFERRED-PAYMENT LAND.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, Whether the Government will consider the expediency of postponing the sale of any deferred-payment land until Parliament shall have decided upon the Land Act Amendment Bill now before the House of Representatives? He explained that his reason for putting the question was this: There had been several blocks of land opened for sale on deferred

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payment in Otago of late; but no application had been made, owing to the fact that an understanding had been allowed to grow up that it was the intention of the late Government to introduce a Bill reducing the upset price on deferred-payment land from £3 to £1 10s. per acre. He heard there was some intention of introducing such a Bill, and, if so, as there were some blocks advertised for sale almost immediately, the honorable gentleman would see that some accusation of unfairness might be made, if applicants at these sales were required to pay £3 per acre, while applicants at subsequent sales had only to pay 30s. He hoped the honorable member would consider the expediency of postponing all sales until the question was dealt with.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER replied that the Government had considered the position of this question, and had come to the conclusion that, under all the circumstances, no more land of this class should be opened until the close of the present session.

WELLINGTON-HUTT RAILWAY.

The Hon. Captain FRASER asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, Whether the railway authorities have sanctioned the express rate of speed at which the Featherston train travels between Pitone and Wellington? This matter did not affect him personally, because, at his age, it mattered little whether he was shunted off the line to-day or to-morrow; but he asked the question in the interests of a number of persons who travelled on the line last Saturday afternoon, and whose lives had been placed in great peril by the insane rate at which the train was allowed to travel along dangerous curves between Pitone and Wellington. The distance was done in a quarter of an hour, and it was calculated that the train travelled round these curves at the rate of thirty-two miles an hour.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER said the Government were given to understand that the rate of speed prescribed for this line was strictly adhered to—that was, from eighteen to twenty miles an hour. As to the curves to which reference had been made, the speed at which the train travelled round these was from ten to twelve miles an hour, and that rate had not been exceeded.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE might say, in reference to the explanation of the Hon. the Attorney-General, he had heard a good deal on the subject, from persons who were in the habit of travelling on this line, and he believed the Attorney-General was entirely under a misapprehension with regard to the rate at which the trains were occasionally driven along the curves. The instructions alluded to may have been given, but they were not carried out in their entirety. Complaints were continually being made on this subject.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said his belief was that, if the train really had been driven at the rate of thirty-two miles an hour round those curves, it must have been upset. He should be sorry to think—

The Hon. the SPEAKER said discussion could not be allowed.

UNIVERSITY.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER said he should only move this motion *pro forma*, but he should like to be informed whether it was not competent for a member who had introduced a petition into the Council to move that such petition be referred to a special Committee; because he understood that certain members of the Council thought he had been guilty of some discourtesy in interposing this motion between the petition referred to and the Public Petitions Committee. He hoped, at any rate, that honorable gentlemen would acquit him of intentional discourtesy; and in deference to feelings which had been expressed he should not press the motion. At the same time it was important that the manner of dealing with petitions should be more clearly expressed, if it was the case that all petitions must be dealt with by the Public Petitions Committee. The Standing Orders provided that petitions should go to the Public Petitions Committee "unless" some further action were taken. That was the effect of the Standing Order, though he was not quite certain about the precise words; and he took it that it was quite open to him under such a Standing Order to move the motion standing in his name without any discourtesy to the Petitions Committee. In a matter where a considerable amount of work had to be done, his object was simply to save the Public Petitions Committee the labour of doing it; but, if that Committee were willing to do the work, he had no objection to the matter going to them, because he believed they would do justice in the matter.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the petition of the Chancellor of the University of New Zealand be printed, and that it be referred to a Select Committee, with power to call for papers and persons; and to report in a week. Such Committee to consist of the Hon. the Speaker, the Hon. Mr. Acland, the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, the Hon. Dr. Grace, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover."—(*Hon. Mr. Miller.*)

The Hon. Colonel BRETT had no doubt that the Hon. Mr. Miller's remarks had arisen from the circumstance that he (Colonel Brett) had expressed to that honorable gentleman his intention of opposing the motion. He thought the honorable member was ignoring the Public Petitions Committee altogether, and acting towards it with great discourtesy, because it was as much as to say that it was not competent to deal with so important a matter. Besides, it was an unwelcome precedent to set; and the special Committee proposed in the motion savoured very much of a packed Committee. The Hon. the Speaker was first on the list, and he was a member of the Senate of the University; the Hon. Mr. Acland, the Hon. Dr. Grace, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the honorable the mover were all connected with the University; and it seemed unwise and unfair to appoint such a Committee. It was a violation of all the rules descending to the colony from the Imperial Parliament at Home. Packed Committees were never allowed; and he could not be a party to it. If this were done, and he had any petition referring to any

local matter, he should make a point of having a Committee to consider such a petition composed entirely of local persons who were favourable to the request contained in the petition. What would be the result if this motion were carried? The Committee would be a biased and unjust Committee.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said the Hon. Colonel Brett could not have read the petition.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT.—Oh, yes, I have.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE thought, if the honorable member had read the petition, he should consider what was really sought by it, because there was really no ground for saying that any Committee could be biased on the subject. The fact was, there were a number of properties belonging to the University which were absolutely idle, all over the country, because the University had no power to deal with them. He knew of two blocks of land, each ten thousand acres in extent, to lease or buy which any amount of applications had been received during the last four or five years; but the authorities of the University had no power to deal with them, and the consequence was, the reserves could not be utilized. Parliament had allocated these reserves as endowments, and yet, because certain powers had not been given, the endowments were practically of no value. He could not conceive that any set of gentlemen would refuse to put them upon such a footing as would enable them to be applied to the use the country intended. Therefore he hoped the honorable gentleman would not withdraw the motion; but he had no strong feeling with regard to the particular names on the Committee, because he was quite certain only one conclusion could be come to—namely, that steps should at once be taken to utilize these lands. He thought that, notwithstanding the present state of the politics of the country, this matter might be dealt with by the Council; and he should regret very much if any thin-skinnedness on the part of the Public Petitions Committee should prevent action being taken. Last year, he was sorry to say, there was no time for the Government to bring in a measure to enable the University to deal with these reserves; but he hoped the motion would be pressed, and that some action would now be taken in regard to this matter.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL was in hopes, when the Hon. Mr. Miller said he had no intention of proceeding with the motion, that the matter would be allowed to drop: but, after the statement which had fallen from the honorable and gallant member opposite (Colonel Brett), members who took an interest in matters of order should express their opinions on the matter. He was at a loss to conceive what reason there could be for the Public Petitions Committee taking any offence at the reference of this special question to a special Committee for investigation. The Public Petitions Committee of the Legislative Council, as of the House of Representatives, had special functions which were more of an examining nature than anything else: first of all they had to say whether petitions were in order, and then they had to offer the Council advice

upon the subject-matter of petitions. But it would be a complete innovation in the practice of Parliament if either of the Standing Committees claimed a right to exclude from separate investigation any subjects contained in a petition coming before the House. Members of the Public Petitions Committee could not reasonably take offence at a proposal to have this matter, which required careful consideration, investigated by a special Committee, for the inquiry would require time that the Petitions Committee could not well spare from the other matters that had to come under their consideration. He quite agreed with what had fallen from the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, and might give instances in point. When on the West Coast, last December, one of the matters which interested him was the position of a University reserve of ten thousand acres, with the setting-apart of which he had had something to do; and, to his great surprise, he found that certain interests had operated in this way: The reserve was not set aside, but was shunted about from one position to another, with the result of reducing its value. The University Act passed many years ago had not only, with that contempt for law which seemed to permeate all the Government departments, been disregarded, but actually and wilfully frustrated. He made it his business to visit the land which was ultimately set aside, and had informed the authorities that he should bring the matter before the Chancellor. He did so, and found that the Council of the New Zealand University knew nothing about the land, and apparently had taken no interest in the matter, nor had any steps been taken to utilize a property of great value: one which, if the provisions of the law had been obeyed, would have done that which had been done in the Province of Wellington by the Hon. the Speaker, who had so often, in his private capacity, brought before the Legislature the necessity for creating and utilizing valuable endowments for higher education. When he passed through this city he went to the Crown Lands Office to press the issue of the Crown grant; and he asked upon what authority or title the reserve ordered by the Legislature had been so long set aside, when he was promised that the matter would be inquired into and put into a proper shape. His attention had long been directed to the question of educational reserves generally, and he had last year moved for a return, which had just been laid on the table, in order to show how all the education reserves were situated, his object being to have an inquiry made into the matter, which would lead to a great and much-needed reform. He had long felt that the reserves for higher education, made with a lavish hand in some cases, but in a most niggardly way in others, had been allowed to drift about without being properly looked after; and the first step necessary was to ascertain the exact position of these reserves, with a view to arriving at some conclusion as to the way in which they could best be dealt with. The petition opened large questions bearing not only on the particular requirements of the New Zealand University, but also on the cause of public education; and the Public

Petitions Committee ought not to feel hurt if it was desired that this matter should be dealt with by a special Committee. It was just as well, perhaps, that the Public Petitions Committee should take the matter in hand now; but he begged to say that, if the Hon. Mr. Miller did not proceed ultimately with this inquiry, there were other members who would, for some of them did not see that a subject so large in its bearings on the future welfare of the country should be held to be an inferior matter, which did not require that investigation which alone could be given to it by a special Committee.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said he did not gather from the observations of his honorable and gallant friend opposite that he was speaking the sentiments of the Public Petitions Committee, nor did he say that this particular question had been at all considered by the Committee. In saying what he did on the subject, he presumed the Hon. Colonel Brett spoke his individual sentiments, and not the sentiments of the whole of the Committee, as the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell appeared to have supposed. He (Dr. Pollen) was a member of that Committee himself, and he was not aware that this question had been submitted to it, or that any opinion had been expressed by the Committee on the subject. He was obliged to differ from the honorable and gallant Colonel opposite, and considered that the best way of dealing with this question was to refer it to a separate Select Committee. The subject was not by any means new. The only question, as far as he knew, which remained to be decided was, whether or not Crown grants of these lands should now be made to the New Zealand University, or whether they should be allowed to remain dedicated to the purposes of higher education in the provincial districts in which they were situated. There had not been up to this time any neglect in efforts to utilize these lands; but the difficulty was in so utilizing them as to obtain any revenue. There were three of these reserves in the Province of Auckland—one in the Bay of Plenty District, one in the Waikato, and one on the western side of the River Waipa—which contained about ten thousand acres each. He knew of his own knowledge that it had been very difficult to get for these reserves by way of rent anything at all approaching to the value of them. An offer was once made for a lease of ten thousand acres of land in the Bay of Plenty for pastoral purposes. He was now speaking from recollection. The proposition was, that the value of the land should be taken at 10s. an acre, and that the rent to be assessed should represent 5 per cent. on the capital value. The gentlemen who made application for the lease said that that was absolutely an absurd price, and would not look at it at all. In Waikato the reserve was a very valuable one, containing coal and other minerals. Some years ago that reserve might have been let for a small rental, but he himself took action to prevent its being interfered with until such time as the country was opened up by the railway, and the true value of the land was ascertained. What had been done with regard to that reserve within the last two years he did not know; but he thought

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it was a valuable reserve, and would now produce a very considerable revenue. The other reserve on the western side of the Waipa would not produce anything for some years to come, he very much feared. It contained limestone, and it was believed at one time that the reserve could produce all the lime that was required for all the districts of the Waikato; but nothing came of it. With respect to the land in Taranaki, he believed it had but recently been set aside. The exact nature of the land he did not know, but there had been a difficulty in finding out where ten thousand acres could be procured in one block to constitute the reserve. He hoped the Hon. Mr. Miller would not withdraw his motion. It was a question which it was desirable to have settled. He saw no objection whatever to its being considered by a Select Committee, and he hoped the honorable member would proceed with his motion, which he should certainly vote for.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE said he felt very anxious to assure the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell that he was quite in error in supposing that no steps had been taken by the New Zealand University to preserve these endowments. On the contrary, he was in a position to state that, ever since the New Zealand University Act was passed, every kind of effort had been made in order to secure those reserves intended by the State for the purposes of the New Zealand University. Successive Governments had verbally consented to issue these grants, or had given a qualified consent, but no Government had ever taken any practical measure to carry out the provisions of the law with regard to these endowments. He had been engaged time after time in deputations to the different Ministers occupying the Government benches, for the last five or six years, urging upon them that due respect to the law which should have been their first duty. But in every instance the University Council and Senate had been met with difficulty after difficulty. The truth was, that Ministers had been unwilling to part with these lands—unwilling to observe the law. The law distinctly provided that these lands were to be vested in the New Zealand University for the purposes of high-class education, and to this day the University had never been able to obtain any title, at any rate to the majority of these lands. So far from the University not having taken exception to this ten thousand acres having been shunted about on the West Coast, they had invariably pressed for a settlement of this question, both there and all over New Zealand. He could not forget that the Hon. Dr. Pollen introduced a measure in the Council—which he (Dr. Grace) opposed—practically despoiling the New Zealand University of one of its endowments, for the purpose, as the honorable gentleman said, of opening up the district. He remembered the honorable gentleman insisting that the settlement of the country must not be arrested for the hypothetical advantage that might accrue through this land being reserved for purposes of higher education. The result was, that the ten thousand acres were, as far as he could remember, by Act diverted from that purpose, and for all practical

purposes passed away from the New Zealand University for ever. There had been many reasons which had led to this trifling with the law. A strong desire existed in the Province of Otago to have one University, and that one not the University which now exists. There was a desire in the provincial districts to have these reserves diverted from the objects for which they were originally allocated to the development of high-class education in a provincial sense, in provincial districts; but any inquiry would prove the justice of his contention, that the New Zealand University had at all times made every effort to be true to the important trusts with which it was clothed by Act of the Legislature, and had not been guilty of any neglect to perform the duties devolving upon it. The whole question was one which would repay inquiry from the beginning. Honorable gentlemen who wished to familiarize themselves with the subject would have to go back five or six years and unravel the tangled mesh surrounding it; but of this he felt certain, that no inquiry would go to show that the New Zealand University had ever neglected its duty in its endeavour to conserve this property which by Act was conferred upon it. For his own part, it was with an overpowering sense of shame that he stood up there and declared that Government after Government had systematically resisted the adoption of the ordinary means which would have placed these reserves on a sound and satisfactory footing. The object was to despoil the University, because it was not prepared to truckle to the political necessities of the hour. It had been above truckling to political considerations, and in that loyalty to its sacred trust the New Zealand University had been treated with anything but the consideration which its services deserved.

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY thought enough had been said to show that this was a matter of such great public importance that there should be a separate Committee appointed. He understood the honorable and gallant Colonel opposite to say that one reason he had for opposing the appointment of this Committee was, that it was a packed Committee. He did not think the honorable and gallant gentleman wished to use the term in the way in which it was generally understood. Still, the expression was too strong a one to use. He (Mr. Buckley) thought the appointment of all these Sessional Committees, and especially the one of which the honorable and gallant gentleman was Chairman, did not give satisfaction to the whole of the members of the Council. He wished to point out that the names of several honorable members who had not put in an appearance during the session at all were placed on Committees, whilst there were names of honorable members who were in constant attendance not on any Committee.

The Hon. Captain FRASER supposed that, when the honorable and gallant Colonel opposite used the word "packed," he meant to show that there were two members of the Committee who were members of the University, and that possibly they might have an involuntary mental bias over which they could exercise no control. The

honorable and gallant Colonel was perfectly right when he hinted that it behoved Parliament to be very particular in the constitution of its Select Committees, and that no one should be on this Committee who had the slightest personal interest in the matter.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL did not see that the Committee proposed was open to the accusation of being packed. The honorable the mover proposed that the Committee should be constituted principally of gentlemen who had taken a great interest in the subject. He congratulated the Hon. Mr. Miller on the names he had selected for this Committee, and he was quite sure the motion would be agreed to, inasmuch as no dissentient voice had been raised against it except that of the honorable and gallant Colonel, who had taken umbrage at some shadowy slight on the Public Petitions Committee, which he (Mr. Mantell) failed to see. He hoped this Committee would be appointed. The Chairman of the Public Petitions Committee appeared to depart from the rule followed in former years—that was, to avoid dealing with any special subject which could more properly and efficiently be dealt with by a separate Committee. When petitions were presented with respect to which Bills might be introduced during the session, it was the invariable practice of the Public Petitions Committee to recommend that such Bills should be referred to a Select Committee. The special function of the Public Petitions Committee formerly was to investigate simply those matters for the investigation of which it could not indicate a better Committee. He thought it would be a great pity if that practice were departed from now. He hoped the Hon. Mr. Miller would proceed with his motion, which would evidently be affirmed by the Council.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT desired to answer the question put by the Hon. Dr. Pollen. He moved in this matter solely on his own account. He was not instigated by the Committee over which he had the honor to preside. Two or three members of that Committee quite agreed with what he was going to do. He would be glad to withdraw his opposition to the motion.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER, in reply, said that under these circumstances the case was entirely altered. He apprehended, from what the honorable and gallant Colonel had said, that the Public Petitions Committee entirely acquitted him of any intention of discourtesy. Therefore he agreed in the view put forth, that, as this was a matter which would take up a considerable time, it was advisable, in the interests of the objects sought to be attained, that a Select Committee should be appointed. If there were any objection to the names of the Committee, he should be happy to submit to any alteration that might be considered desirable. No doubt the honorable and gallant Colonel used the term "packed" in a hurried moment. If the Committee were packed, it was packed in the sense of some of its members being stuffed with information about the University, which, probably, as a rule, honorable members were not possessed of. He thought it very desirable there should be honorable gentlemen on this Committee who were acquainted with Uni-

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versity matters. For that reason he inserted the name of the Hon. Dr. Grace, who was known to possess a great deal of information and had taken a vast amount of interest in the matter from the commencement, and who was one of the most useful members of the University Council. The Hon. Mr. Acland had been a member of that Council. He might say that he thought there was a slight misunderstanding about this question of people having no bias.

The Hon. Captain FRASER. — Involuntary bias.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER said it was quite right, if a person had a proper object in view, that he should strive to attain that object—by a Committee or anything else. This was not like a political affair, where political bias might be very often prejudicial to the public interests. There was this also to be remembered: that when this Committee brought up its report it would be open for any honorable member to take objection to it. With these few words he would bow to the wishes of the majority of the Council, and move the motion standing in his name.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes past three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 23rd October, 1879.

First Reading—Second Readings—Land Act—Ministry's Allowances—J. White—West Coast Roads—West Coast Gold Fields—Middle Island Railways—Grey Ministry—Subsidies—Waimakariri River—Use of "Luna"—Cambridge Branch Railway—Native Land Purchases—Ferry Mead—Sumner Railway—Kumara Educational Reserve—Want of Confidence—West Coast Public Works—Gold Duty—Land Transfer Bill—Licensing Bill (No. 1)—Ashburton County Council Waterworks Bill—Privilege—Resident Magistrates Act 1867 Amendment Bill—Wellington Harbour Board Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Wairoa Harbour Board Endowment Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Hawke's Bay and Marlborough Rivers Bill, New River Pilot-Station Reserve Bill, Auckland Free Public Library Aid Bill.

LAND ACT.

Mr. PITT asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government intend, during the present session, to amend "The Land Act, 1877;" and, if so, whether they propose to give effect to the recommendations made by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Nelson, in his last annual report? The question might apply also to "The Land Sales Act, 1877." His reason for asking the question was, that a series of resolutions were passed by the Waste Lands Board of Nelson on the 25th September, 1879, copies of which had

been forwarded to the Secretary of Crown Lands, and, together with certain recommendations which were made by the Commissioner of Crown Lands for Nelson, were embodied in that officer's last annual report. They referred generally to the price of land in the district, and pointed out that the operation of "The Land Sales Act, 1877," which fixed the minimum price at £1 per acre, had seriously retarded the *bond fide* settlement of Crown lands in the interior and outlying districts, where the land was difficult of access and of somewhat inferior character. There were other amendments suggested in the resolutions and in the report, and he would be glad to hear from the Minister of Lands that the Government proposed to amend the Act in the direction pointed out.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that there was a Bill, which had been prepared by the late Government, now before the House, for the amendment of "The Land Act, 1877." With regard to the question of how it affected the regulations relative to the sale of Crown lands in Nelson, he had not had full opportunity of looking into the matter. The intention of the Government was to afford very considerably increased facilities beyond those now provided for in the amending Bill before the House. He would be very glad to confer with the honorable gentleman as to the particular way in which it would affect the state of affairs in Nelson.

MINISTERS' ALLOWANCES.

Mr. SUTTON asked the Government, Whether they will lay before this House a return of all sums paid to Ministers for house allowance, travelling allowance, or any other payments in excess of salary, since 1st July, 1878?

Mr. HALL said the Government would have this return prepared and laid on the table. He did not know whether the honorable gentleman wished the cab-hire to be included; it was, strictly speaking, not payment to Ministers but for Ministers.

Mr. SUTTON thought it would be as well to include the cab-hire.

J. WHITE.

Mr. SUTTON asked the Government, What is the nature of the services at present performed by Mr. John White; what is his salary; and out of what vote is it paid? He was induced to put this question on the Paper because the gentleman to whom it referred had, he believed, been employed in Wellington for the last three or four months, and it was generally understood that he was engaged writing a book, in which the Premier was very much interested.

Mr. BRYCE replied that Mr. White's special duty was the compiling of manuscripts relative to Maori traditions. His salary was £450 a year, and he was paid at present out of contingencies. It was proposed, however, to place the salary on the estimates. He would lay on the table certain documents connected with the appointment.

Captain RUSSELL would suggest that the Native Minister should lay a few specimen-pages of the work on the table.

Mr. BRYCE said he could not do that at present.

WEST COAST ROADS.

Mr. J. B. FISHER asked the Premier, Whether the Government recognize the necessity and justice of taking over and maintaining the main lines of road on the west coast of the Middle Island? (2.) Whether the Government are aware that the Buller County Council has not raised, and cannot raise, sufficient revenue for maintaining existing roads within the county, and that great loss is annually accruing to the colony from the inability of this county to assist in developing its resources by making short tracks connecting new and proved gold fields with the centres of trade and population? (3.) Whether the Government are aware that new, rich, and proved gold fields are lying unproductive in the Buller County for want of a few hundred pounds to make roads to them? His object was to ascertain from the Government whether they recognized the fact that the present county administration was utterly unadapted to the circumstances of some parts of the colony. In this case there was a county with an area one hundred miles long, or perhaps more, and about thirty miles wide, in which the revenue, independent of Government grants, amounted to £4,038, of which £1,930 went towards the cost of administration. The total amount of the rates was £263. That was the whole revenue produced by the rate of a shilling in the pound on all rateable property. He thought the Government and the House would agree that such revenue as that was totally inadequate for such a district. It was, at any rate, quite insufficient to enable any county to develop the resources of the country by making such roads and tracks as were necessary to open up a gold field. His main object in asking the question was to ascertain whether the Government recognized the facts stated in the question, and whether they proposed to bring down a measure for the purpose of meeting the requirements of such counties as those he referred to.

Mr. HALL, in answer to the second and third questions, would state that a sum of money had been placed on the estimates as a subsidy towards the construction of prospecting tracks on the gold fields. With regard to the first question—namely, "Whether the Government recognized the necessity and justice of their taking over and maintaining the main lines of road on the West Coast of the Middle Island?"—that was part of the whole public works policy of the Government, which it would not be desirable to enter upon piecemeal. The information with regard to that could not be furnished until his honorable colleague came down with his Public Works Statement.

WEST COAST GOLD FIELDS.

Mr. J. B. FISHER asked the Minister of Mines, Whether the Government are aware that great and unnecessary injury is being done to the gold-mining industry by the withdrawal of lands upon the Nelson South-West Gold Fields from occupation, notice whereof is given in the *Gazettes*

of 20th June and 27th December, 1878? Also, whether Government will cause inquiry to be made by impartial and disinterested persons; and, if the foregoing suggestion is proved, they will throw the lands again open for occupation by miners? The question referred to the reserves made by the Government in the Waimangaroa Valley. Last year certain lands in the locality, which had been opened for the purposes of gold-mining, were withdrawn from occupation for gold-mining purposes. A large part of the land was already in the occupation of gold-miners, who had been carrying on their operations, and they had been placed at a very great disadvantage, while the mining industry in the locality had suffered very much in consequence of the withdrawal of these lands. He believed that during the sitting of the last Parliament some promise was made by the then Government that they would deal with the case, and he would like to know whether anything had been done.

Mr. OLIVER replied that the Government recognized the desirability of making proper provision in this matter, and they had instructed the officer to report upon it.

MIDDLE ISLAND RAILWAYS.

Mr. HISLOP asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Government intend to remove from Christchurch to Dunedin the Departments of the Commissioner, the Accountant, and the Cashier of the Middle Island Railways, or any of these departments; and, if so, when such removal may be expected to take place? It would be remembered that during the last elections, and some time before, the subject mentioned in this question occupied attention both at Dunedin and at Christchurch, and the present Minister for Public Works took a very strong view in one direction, and he believed other members of the Government took strong views in other directions. He would like to know what the intention of the Government was, both because this was a question of great importance—it seemed to have been a burning political question in Dunedin for some time past—and because he was anxious to see how the Government were going to reconcile the differences of individual members. The answer might be indicative of what the Government would do with regard to the other questions.

Mr. OLIVER, in reply, said he was not aware that during the late elections he alluded to this subject in any way; but he might inform the honorable member that the matter had not been decided yet.

GREY MINISTRY.

Sir G. GREY asked the Premier, If he will request the Governor to permit correspondence with late Ministers regarding their resignations to be presented to Parliament?

Mr. HALL replied that he would be very glad to make the request.

SUBSIDIES.

Mr. SHEPHARD asked the Government, If they will consider the advisability of making such an alteration in the mode of distributing the sub-

sidies to counties and road districts as will apportion them according to the number of miles of road to be maintained, instead of, as at present, in proportion to the amount of rates collected? He would have made this question the subject of a motion had it not been for the state of business in the House. The subject was of very great importance to the country districts, especially to those where population was very thin, and through which main trunk roads ran. He might mention the case of the Waimea County, and that of the Inangahua County. He spoke from personal knowledge as to the Waimea County, being a member of the County Council, and he could say that the general revenue, including the rates and subsidies, was wholly insufficient to keep in repair the main trunk line of road which ran from Nelson to Greymouth and Westport, and which was as much a road for public use as that from Christchurch to Hokitika. A large extent of this road also ran through the Inangahua County, and the rates that were levied, together with the subsidies, were not sufficient to keep in repair one mile of the road. The consequence was that during the winter months—sometimes for three or four months together—these roads were impassable for drays. At all times of the year they were unsafe for other vehicles, while if they were kept in proper repair a coach might run from sea to sea. While the counties he had referred to were almost entirely starved, others, with, perhaps, not so many requirements, were in the enjoyment of riches. He ventured to ask the Government to consider the propriety of adopting the principle of mileage in these districts rather than that of taking over the main roads. He believed the counties could do the work much more cheaply, and the present amount of subsidy would be sufficient under the mileage system to keep the whole of the trunk roads in the colony in repair. The question was of very great importance to the districts he had mentioned, and no doubt to many others he was not acquainted with, and was very well worthy the serious consideration of the Government.

Mr. HALL, in reply, said that the question of the subsidies to local bodies had received the attention of the Government, but it was one on which they had arrived at no conclusion. It was a large subject, and would require very serious consideration, and the decision of the Government with regard to it would be announced in the Financial Statement.

WAIMAKARIRI RIVER.

Mr. BOWEN asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the mischief done to the north bank of the Waimakariri River by the works constructed by order of the Board of Conservators; and whether they will take steps to prevent it?

Mr. ROLLESTON said he had been unable to find any official record on this subject. He was aware that there had been dissatisfaction in that district in consequence of the damage done through the river having taken a course along the north bank. So far as he could see, the proper step to be taken was for a Board of Conservators

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to be appointed for the northern bank of the Waimakariri.

USE OF "LUNA."

Major HARRIS asked the Minister in Charge of the Marine Department, If he will lay before this House a return showing all moneys received by the Government from individual Ministers for the use of the steamer "Luna" in entertaining their friends in Wellington Harbour?

Major ATKINSON said he found, on inquiry, that the "Luna" was never under the authority of the Marine Department. He believed that at the time referred to it was under the Native Department, but he had not yet been able to ascertain that. He would, however, endeavour to find out, and have the return prepared for the honorable gentleman.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH RAILWAY.

Mr. WHYTE asked the Government, If, in the event of the five-million loan being obtained, they will cause a sufficient sum to be placed on the estimates for the construction of the Cambridge Branch Railway? He said perhaps this was not the time to advocate the construction of this railway, but he asked this question because he felt certain that the Government, judging from the plans, and the estimates not only of the cost of construction, but also of its probable revenue, furnished to them at the expense of the settlers, would see that this was no political railway, but a really useful and remunerative undertaking.

Mr. OLIVER said that no survey had been made of the country through which the line would pass, but the Government believed it was a line that was well worthy of consideration.

NATIVE LAND PURCHASES.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Government, If a return will be furnished of the amounts paid since the 30th June, 1877, for services rendered by permanent officers or others in connection with the purchase of Native lands, and charged to Native Land Purchase vote; such return to give the nature of the service rendered in each case?

Mr. BRYCE said there would be no objection to furnish the return.

FERRY MEAD-SUMNER RAILWAY.

Mr. J. T. FISHER asked the Government, If they will cause a sum of money to be placed on the estimates for the purpose of constructing a branch line of railway from Ferry Mead to Sumner? There were two members of the Government, he believed, who had some knowledge of the value of such a line, and the service it would be to the people of Christchurch, Sydenham, and other suburbs.

Mr. OLIVER said that information in the possession of the Government led them to believe that the line would pay remarkably well. It was a very short line, and he was told that 20 per cent. profit might be expected from it. That being the case, they would give it their favourable consideration.

KUMARA EDUCATIONAL RESERVE.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether it is their intention to bring in a Bill dealing

with the educational reserve, Kumara, Westland, in such manner as prayed for by petition last session? Last session a petition was presented to the House, asking that an inquiry should be made into the grievances urged by the miners in the neighbourhood of Kumara; and the Government promised to bring in a Bill to deal with the question. He wished to know whether the present Government would introduce a Bill to give effect to the wishes of the petitioners.

Mr. OLIVER said that a Bill dealing with the subject was in course of preparation.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE.

Mr. HALL said that on the previous day he had promised to inform the House at its next sitting what course the Government proposed to take in reference to the motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers. Looking at the fact that this was a private members' day, and that the Government wished to see some progress made with the private business, the Government would not go on with the want-of-confidence motion that day; but next day they would, either by taking the honorable gentleman's motion or in some other way, be ready to bring the question to an issue.

Mr. MACANDREW said he did not think it would be prudent to interfere with the private business: at the same time, he had a strong feeling that they were not doing right in going on. He thought they ought to decide the want-of-confidence question before going on with any other business; but, as he did not wish to interfere with the private business, he would not object to the course proposed by the honorable gentleman—that was to say, they would go on on the understanding that no Government business should be taken.

Mr. HALL.—Of course, if the honorable gentleman objects to the introduction of any Government Bills, we will not proceed with them.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I do object.

Mr. HALL then proposed the postponement of the Orders of the day for the introduction of Government Bills.

Motion agreed to.

WEST COAST PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he placed it on the Order Paper with the view of obtaining some very necessary information, which would be very useful to the West Coast members, who thought they had been very badly treated for many years past in the matter of public expenditure.

Motion made, and question proposed, "For a return showing the amount of money spent on public works on the west coast of the Middle Island from the 30th June, 1872, to the 1st October, 1877."—(Mr. Hursthouse.)

Mr. SEDDON moved, as an amendment, That the return show the expenditure from the 30th June, 1864, to the 1st October, 1877. It was only fair that the return should show the whole amount expended on public works on the West Coast.

Major ATKINSON said the Government would

be glad to give all possible information, but the motion would have to be made more specific; because in its present form it would include moneys spent by local bodies and County Councils. If it referred to expenditure out of loan, it ought specifically to say so.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE said he wished the motion to refer to moneys spent out of loan.

Major ATKINSON pointed out that in that case the return would date from the year 1870.

Mr. SEDDON thought it would be as well to make the return date from the 30th June, 1864, to the 1st October, 1879.

Mr. SHEPARD suggested that the return should be made up to the 30th June, 1879, the date upon which the accounts were made up.

Mr. HALL thought the suggestion that the return should only refer to public works carried on by the General Government would hardly meet the views of the mover. It would be easy to make out the full return, and to distinguish the works performed by the General Government from those by other bodies.

Mr. GISBORNE pointed out that the mover only wished for a return of the expenditure out of loan, and therefore it must be expenditure by the General Government.

Mr. MURRAY said no reason had been adduced for moving for this return, which scarcely a member of the House would read when prepared. He thought it would be much better to spend money on roads and bridges than in employing printers in Wellington to print returns that nobody read. Unless some good reason was given for furnishing the return he would vote against it.

Mr. SEDDON explained that his reason for asking for a return for the whole period since 1864 was to show that no money had been expended by the General Government on the West Coast until the years 1877-79, during which a large amount had been expended there by the late Government. If the motion were left as introduced, it would leave honorable members under the impression that the West Coast had been too well treated by the Grey Ministry. He wanted to show the total amount spent, and from that to prove that the West Coast had not received justice from previous Governments. When the return was on the table, he felt certain it would be found that his version of the affair was correct. Taking into consideration the population of the West Coast; that the West Coast had exported 200,000 ounces of gold, worth £8,000,000; that, being purely a gold-fields district, the inhabitants had to import everything; and considering the way miners lived, the goods they consumed, and the heavy duties on those goods, he contended that the people of the West Coast paid more to the revenue than twice the same population in any other part of the colony. Under these circumstances, he hoped he had made out a sufficient case for asking for the return. It would not be voluminous, because there would be nothing to put in it except for the last two years. He had no doubt, when the Premier mentioned what had been done by other bodies, he wished to insert the money spent on

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the Christchurch Road in the return—a work which was carried out by Canterbury. If that were the case, it might be necessary to go into the question of what benefits had been derived from that road, but he would not do so at present.

Amendment agreed to, and motion, as amended, agreed to.

GOLD DUTY.

Mr. GIBBS, in moving the motion standing in his name, said it was a motion which had been introduced on two previous occasions, and on each of those occasions, he need scarcely say, it was not carried. He had himself felt that it would be unwise that it should be carried, as it was a large item of local revenue, but it had since been represented to him by miners in several localities that they were placed at a considerable disadvantage under the present system. The House would be aware that the gold fields revenue was now local, and a very important item in some cases. It had been given to the mining districts because they had no rating power, and therefore no means of obtaining local revenue to administer works within the gold fields. It was found by experience, however, as far as he had seen, and according to the representations made to him, that the miners did not receive their fair share of benefit from this special taxation—that, many of the local bodies being composed of representatives of a mixed population of settlers and miners, a very large proportion of the revenue derived from this source was spent within the more settled parts of the districts, and the gold fields themselves were not opened up by roads, as it was intended they should be when this revenue was given to them. Another thing which had to be considered was, that the duty of 2s. an ounce put upon the gold was a special tax on the miners—an income-tax, he might say—and, apart from that, a system of taxation by which they had to pay more than the settlers, who were rated at 1s. in the pound. In addition to that, he might point out that under the Counties Act the miners had a vote, but they had no vote for the smaller local bodies which had most to do with the spending of this money. If the miners had such a vote, he did not think they would have so much cause for complaint against this tax; but they now felt they were taxed unduly under these local bodies, and had not the benefit of the revenue they contributed.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the gold duty should be reduced by 1s. per ounce."—(*Mr. Gibbs.*)

Mr. SEDDON said the question put by the honorable gentleman was a very important one, and one which he intended to fairly take into consideration. Affecting this particular source of revenue was the fact that the local bodies in many districts were dependent on it, and if it were taken away from the gold-fields counties there would be very little left. There was, however, this fact also to be borne in mind: that this was a special tax imposed upon one class of the community. There was now growing up throughout the colony a general desire to impose taxation so that it should fall evenly upon all classes;

it was also said that every encouragement should be given to local industries; and yet the whole legislation of the past had been to specially tax this gold industry. In Victoria and New South Wales the gold duty had been abolished altogether—in the former colony for many years. In New Zealand, however, the miner was taxed in addition £1 for his miner's right, for which he had to pay only 5s. in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland. Such being the case, he would put it to the House whether the duty should not be abolished altogether. He was of opinion that that was the proper way to deal with the question; although it might perhaps be too sweeping if the House were asked immediately to say that the gold duty should be abolished, because it might leave County Councils and other bodies dependent on it in a state of financial embarrassment. He took it, the best method would be to adopt the course taken in New South Wales, which was to provide by legislation that the duty should be reduced by a fixed amount per annum, so that at the end of a term of years the whole would be altogether done away with. If the House affirmed that principle, they would be doing what was right and just to the local bodies, and would also be remedying an evil which had existed in the colony since the gold fields were first discovered. He asked for returns the other day showing the amount of gold exported from the colony, and the amount of gold duty paid. Until 1876 the duty was 2s. 6d. an ounce. It had been reduced since then to 2s. an ounce. He had also asked for a return of the male adults located on the various gold fields. If that had been furnished he would have been able to say how much had been paid as a special tax by this class of colonists since Gabriel's Gully broke out. Not having those returns, he would have to confine himself to the facts at his disposal. They had an average population of 13,000 people on the West Coast. Of those, not more than 4,000 were actually engaged in working on the gold fields; still, £200,000 of gold duty had been got from that number of the population. This fact alone proved that the miners of the colony had not received justice from the Legislature. If the same proportionate rate had been imposed upon the export of wool, there would have been an outcry throughout the country, and the House would soon have taken steps to make a reduction. If they were told in the House that in agricultural districts—or where they had those large landed properties—the whole of their local works must be maintained by a tax on wool, there would be such a general outcry, and such pressure would be brought to bear upon the Legislature, that justice would be immediately done. But it was a fact that the gold-fields counties, without exception, were dependent solely upon a special tax of this kind for the construction of works, for the maintenance of roads, and for carrying on their government. Was it fair, he asked, that an industry like this should be taxed to such an enormous extent? The answer from every right-thinking man must be, that it was time the tax was done away with. Then they should consider the collateral advantages

which were conferred by the mining population. Would New Zealand have been in its present position if it had not been for the gold-miners? There was no doubt whatever that they had always been the pioneers of any country. What was California before the gold fields were discovered there? A mere wilderness. But as the gold-mining industry prospered agriculture followed, because it was necessary for the supply of produce to the miners. It was the same in Victoria and New South Wales. What was the state of New Zealand at the time the gold fields broke out in Otago? The Old Identities of Otago at that time were simply a happy-go-lucky kind of people, like those in Nelson, and were supposed to be asleep half their time. Now, however, they looked at the miners in a different way. In Otago it was now recognized that unless they fostered the mining industry they could not compete with other parts of the colony in production. He would not dwell any longer on the fallacies of the past, but would point out the proper course for the future. It was a fact that this class of population had proved beneficial to the colony. As in all other gold countries, it was found that the best gold was got first. It was found that the industry required a large amount of capital; and, as the industry was now going backward, it became the duty of the Legislature to do all it possibly could to relieve this class of the population. It might be argued that a number of large mining companies held claims, and that under those circumstances they would be reaping a benefit. He would meet that argument very fairly by saying that if they passed a measure like the Companies Tax Bill they would get over the difficulty. That measure proposed that when a mining company was paying large dividends it should pay an income-tax, in the same way as a private individual. But there were other companies which had been working at a loss for years, and they still had to pay 2s. an ounce on all the gold they produced. He would say that the removal of the gold duty would have saved some companies in his district from working at a loss. They would simply have been able to keep the claims going, with no direct profit to the shareholders, but paying working expenses; and the Government, the local bodies, and others would have received great indirect benefit from the population employed on those claims. Having dealt with that phase of the question, he would ask the House not to be prejudiced. No doubt in the minds of a great many colonists, and of gentlemen representing agricultural districts, there was a prejudice against a mining community.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. SEDDON was very much pleased indeed to hear that answer. But, looking back to *Hansard*, when this question had been before the House, he found that the chief argument used was that the miners were a migratory class of colonists, here to-day and gone to-morrow. His answer to that was, that their land-laws when the best of the gold was got were such that the miners could not settle down upon the land, and they were consequently forced to go elsewhere. They invested the money they made in New

Zealand in buying land in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland. He might also tell them that the miner of to-day was not of the class of colonists which was here to-day and gone to-morrow. When the gold itself fell off he must go somewhere to live. He found that on all the gold he got he had to pay this special tax; in regard to Customs duties he was also fully taxed; and he could not live without something. He was forced, as it were, to go somewhere else. He would say to the House that, looking at the collateral advantages the colony had derived from this class of the population, and the amount expended upon them in proportion to what was expended upon other classes, they compared more than favourably with other parts of the community. In the district where he had lived for a number of years he had seen a population of from six thousand to seven thousand which only required three policemen. That spoke very highly for those men as colonists. If they compared the statistics of crime he undertook to say they would find a smaller percentage of crime on the gold fields than elsewhere, taking into consideration the temptations that existed. Taking the ordinary gold-miner, he would simply put him against the middle-class man or working-man in any of the neighbouring districts, and if an average were struck he was sure it would be in favour of the miner. As a rule they were an intelligent class of men, and not such as they were generally set down to be. There were traits in the character of the miner which must at all times commend themselves to those who studied such matters, and who had had dealings with them and lived among them for years, as he had. If they took the charitable institutions, it would be found that the miners gave a pound for every shilling contributed by other sections of the community in the same position. The miner's wages did not average more than the wages of labouring-men. In settled districts, where the average wages were 30s. a week, the proportion of subscriptions would be found to be what he had previously stated. They would seldom find cases of extreme poverty or of men dying of want in a mining community. He had himself been nearly a sixth of a century upon the gold fields, and he never knew of a case where persons were allowed to go without a meal or a cup of tea. In the miner's hut there was always a pannikin of tea and a loaf of bread for any person in want. The miners would willingly share their last cup of tea and loaf of bread with any one in distress. In cases of accident occurring among them their conduct was always praiseworthy. Only two days before he left Kumara a fatal accident occurred at Dillman's Town. Three men were sinking a shaft, when the props gave way, and the men were buried. The miners working at the next shaft, seeing that something wrong had occurred, rushed to the scene, and at considerable personal risk went down, and, after working hard for forty-eight hours, succeeded in saving the life of one of the unfortunate men. These men had to carry on their operations with the greatest care, and their act was like facing certain death. They were satis-

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fied at the work they had done in endeavouring to save the lives of their fellows. This was a trait in the character of the miners which should be borne in mind by the House. He wished to show that the miners were not the class of men they had been represented to be in times gone by: on the contrary, they were a most desirable class of colonists. The average wages which they earned at the present time were 30s. a week. Suppose they earned £100 per annum, they were now required to pay £2 10s. in the shape of a special tax. It would be a crying shame if the House allowed such a tax to continue longer. No other class of colonists had to pay a special tax of 2½ per cent. out of their earnings. Even with regard to the income-tax, it was proposed to exempt from the operation of that tax persons whose yearly incomes do not exceed £300. Why should £2 10s. be demanded from the earnings of the digger? It was time the House dealt out justice to the miners. He wished to leave the impression on the minds of honorable members that he was not speaking on this subject simply as a cry, or from the feeling that when this question came up in the House a Gold Fields member was expected to make a long speech, so as to be able to tell his constituents when he returned, "Well, I did all I could to get the gold duty abolished, but I was unsuccessful." He wished to remove that impression, and to tell this House that the time had come in this colony when the Legislature should abolish this taxation. The gold fields districts had suffered through this question not being considered in connection with the question of subsidies. Those districts had to pay a special tax in years past, and had not received a shilling of subsidy on account of that special taxation. In the Westland County the gold duty amounted to £8,000, and the subsidy received from the Government upon rates from property-owners only amounted to £800, at 1s. in the pound. In the passing of the Rating Act the Legislature refused to allow the County Councils on gold fields to rate mining property. That property was specially exempted. The Legislature did not agree to subsidize the gold-fields County Councils to the amount of premium they received in the shape of gold duty. In this clearly there had been a breach of faith. He thought he had made out a very fair case on behalf of the miners. With regard to the amendment he intended to propose, he thought it better not to propose the abolition of the gold duty at once. In bringing forward this amendment he was guided by the course adopted in New South Wales. His amendment was, That the gold duty be reduced at the rate of 6d. per ounce, until altogether abolished, the first reduction to begin on the 1st January, 1880. He thought the House would agree to this amendment. He hoped the Government would support the amendment. He did not wish to harden honorable members: if he did, he could show that at other times honorable gentlemen sitting on the Government benches had voted against the reduction. The question was now of great importance to the mining community. From the facts which had come to the knowledge

of those honorable gentlemen since those votes were given, and knowing that an injustice had been done to this class of colonists, he trusted to see the Government supporting the amendment, and supporting it for the reasons he had stated. The proposal to take off 6d. an ounce until the gold duty was abolished would give the Government time to deal with the question of subsidies to local bodies to maintain the roads and construct public works. He had given this matter very serious consideration, but was not as fully prepared as he could have wished. Seeing that this was a new Parliament, seeing that there were thirty-five new members in the House, who had never heard this question fairly discussed on its merits, and seeing that a large proportion of old members had voted continually for the abolition of the gold duty, or a reduction of it, he trusted that, in this the first session of the seventh Parliament, the House would support the amendment he had just read. He must refer to another phase of the question, and it was this: He would ask what was the advantage of gold to humanity. The honorable member for Grey Valley said it was a very useful commodity. Well, it was a commodity, at all events, that did not fluctuate in value, like most other commodities. When they got the gold they knew they had obtained certain wealth. There was no difficulty in its manufacture. There was no process for it to go through when obtained. The moment it was extracted from the bowels of the earth it could be exchanged for any other commodity. They could purchase anything for gold. It was a mineral that had conferred advantages on humanity from the earliest days to the present time. He would say that they could not too seriously consider this matter, or do too much to foster and encourage those who were engaged in the occupation of unearthing the gold. Those occupied in farming, or the labouring-classes, led easy lives as compared with those engaged in gold-mining. The miners were hourly in danger of losing their lives through accidents. Any class of gold-mining was a precarious and dangerous employment. They had to work in drives hundreds of feet below the surface, and the least mistake in the propping of the mine might cause the instant death of all the miners employed in it. During the whole time the miners were employed at such occupation they were in danger of losing their lives. He might state that in 1871 an accident occurred in a gold mine in the Waimea District: a fall of forty-two feet of earth took place. One man was completely covered, and the head only of another man was to be seen. A number of miners close at hand were washing up one hundred pounds' worth of gold. They left the gold in the tail-race, and went to help the unfortunate men. For two days about three or four hundred men passed the gold frequently, and, as an instance of their honesty, not a single pennyweight of the gold was touched, although it could have been easily shovelled into a pan and taken. That was a class of colonists that should be encouraged. Encouragement should be given to them by holding out the inducement that in the

year 1884 the gold duty would be altogether abolished in New Zealand. With regard to the question of the reduction of the cost of miners' rights, every miner before he can mine on land must first have some title. The miner's right was very much the same as a Crown grant given to a person who held a freehold. Every miner must have this right to hold the ground. When asking for a reduction of the gold duty it would not be right to say that the Legislature must reduce the cost of the miner's right. Once the gold duty was reduced they must next reduce the cost of miners' rights. As he had said before, in the other colonies that had always been done. He would perhaps be met by the argument, "Oh, but the miners take up the country, turn over the soil, and render the land useless for any other purpose." Now, he would meet that by saying, in the first place, that the country from which the miners extracted gold was in nine cases out of ten fit for no other purpose. It was not good agricultural land, was generally in mountainous districts, and, strictly speaking, no soil at all; while it was inaccessible and remote from the ordinary means of communication: its value, in fact, as land was nearly nil. But when he told the House that the miners paid £4 for every acre of Crown land that was turned over, it would be admitted that they had paid more for the land they had occupied than any freeholder in the country had paid. In some instances, the miners had paid £10 an acre. It would take a miner ten years to work an acre of ground, and thus, by paying his miner's right every year, the land would cost him £10 an acre. Both during the days of Provincialism, and now, when the Land Fund was consolidated revenue, the colony had been better paid directly and indirectly for the land that had been worked by the gold-miners than for any other lands which had been sold, either under the laws of the days gone by when land was cheap, or under the existing law. Under those circumstances, seeing that they paid for the land they worked, and seeing that their average earnings were only about 30s. per week, out of which they had to pay £1 or 30s. a year in the shape of a special tax, he asked honorable members, as men sent there to represent all sections of the community and to mete out justice to all classes, to take into consideration the position of the gold-miner in New Zealand, and pass this resolution, so that they might go back to their constituents and say, "Well, if we could not get the total abolition of the duty owing to the present laws, we have obtained what we think will meet the case fairly, and that is, that in the year 1884 there will be no duty to pay." The honorable member for Totara had just made a suggestion, which he would adopt, that it would be well to alter his amendment and make the periodical reduction a shilling instead of sixpence. This was preferable, because no doubt the miner would not get so much benefit from the reduction of 6d. an ounce. The argument might be urged against this proposal that the miners would not get the benefit of any reduction in the gold duty. He thought that they had the means of dealing

with that difficulty. The Legislature should insist upon there being the same competition in this branch of commerce as there was in all others. It might be necessary to do the same as was done in other places and establish a mint, and by coining our own gold the miners would get the full value for it. But, in the present condition of the finances of the colony, a mint would be rather an expensive luxury, and it would be better to take some steps towards preventing the banking institutions in the colony from banding together—as they did at the present time—and agreeing not to pay more than a certain price for gold, not to allow more than a certain overdraft, and to pay only a certain percentage for deposits. It was a most unfortunate thing for any colony to be placed entirely in the hands of the banking institutions; and he would go so far as to say that, if the banks would not give the full benefit of any reductions the Legislature might make, it would be desirable for the colony to have a banking institution of its own—a step, indeed, which it might be advisable to take in any case. It proved that there was a screw loose somewhere when the banking institutions of the colony could be the means of ruining many colonists who were in solvent positions. It had been said that this was due to the Government. He contended that such was not the case, but that it had been owing to the necessity entailed upon the Government during the financial crisis of raising money from the only bank with which an arrangement had been made. They had experienced the evil effects of that. A remedy could be found in the establishment by the colony of a banking institution of its own. He did not see why they could not issue short-dated debentures for small amounts, and why the people in this colony could not have their own Government notes, the same as was done in America, but the securities not so much liable to fluctuation as was the case with the greenbacks in America. This idea, as given, might be in a very crude shape at present, but he thought it was capable of being worked out successfully. The bank deposits, he believed, were larger in proportion on gold fields than in other parts of the colony. It was a fact which could not be controverted that the gold-miners of to-day were very different from what they were in years gone by, when they spent every shilling they made. The banks had branch establishments at the various mining centres, which must pay, otherwise they would not be maintained. Why did they pay? For two reasons: first of all, on account of the heavy profit they made on the gold. That was, he believed, their chief source of profit. They found that £3 16s. an ounce was given for West Coast gold, which was worth £4 1s. at the Mint in Victoria. Therefore the bank must make a very heavy profit. There was no risk, there was no loss, and the value had been ascertained by the assay. If the Legislature decided that the duty should be reduced by 1s. per ounce, and that it should cease altogether in 1882, it would give them time to look round, and provide the means by which they might have a system of local self-government established throughout the length and breadth of the colony

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which would give to each district a fair proportion of the revenue that would be raised. It was monstrous to suppose that under the existing state of affairs the various local bodies could themselves, with the heavy strain upon them, find the money necessary for the carrying on of public works. What had the Government done in the matter of education? It had told the House how much per child should be given, and under this capitation system the profits derived from the schools in the large centres of population assisted to maintain the schools in the scattered districts. The same principle should be applied to all counties. It was not right that, because there were gold-fields counties containing a mining population, they were to pay three times as much in the shape of taxation as other sections of the community. That argument should not hold water for a moment, and, as it was the only one against the proposed reduction, he trusted the House would unanimously adopt the amendment he intended to propose, which was as follows: That the gold duty be reduced by 1s. per ounce per annum until altogether abolished, the first reduction to commence on the 1st January, 1880. He was satisfied that there was no gold-fields county, or any other county, in New Zealand which would not be quite content to abide by the resolution of the House in that respect. The House contained gentlemen who were members of various County Councils, and who represented gold fields, and he felt satisfied that there was not one of these honorable gentlemen who would not be willing to vote for this resolution. It was monstrous to permit this matter to go on as it had been going on for years past, and it would show gross incompetence on the part of the Legislature if it said that, because it would take some trouble to devise other means of raising revenue for the purpose of constructing works in gold-fields counties, therefore such a large proportion of the population should still be subjected to this class taxation. Class taxation it was, and the House had affirmed in days gone by that it would not have class taxation. When a former member for Grey Valley introduced a resolution on the subject of the incidence of taxation, the honorable member for Christchurch City (Sir G. Grey) took advantage of its introduction, and of the fact that some members of the House were discontented because something had not been done in that direction; and a Ministry that had been in office for many years was turned out. The Legislature had for years been endeavouring to do what it could to make the taxation fall equally on the shoulders of all. Contending, as he did without fear of contradiction, that this was class taxation, he asked the House, in justice to a section of the community that had been overburdened so long, to take into consideration the fact that for the last eighteen years this tax had been paid by them, and that they asked now at this late hour that some justice should be done to them.

Mr. SHEPARD had much pleasure in seconding the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Hokitika. The House would hardly expect that he should travel over the

ground the honorable gentleman had traversed. He had told them, in every aspect in which it could be put, how much the miner had helped the country, how good he was to the country, and how much he could fairly claim. Indeed, he hoped the honorable gentleman would have his speech printed and circulated in the mining districts as one grand song in praise of that class of the community. He (Mr. Shephard) supported the reduction or abolition of the gold duty on a principle which he believed every member of the House would admit to be thoroughly sound—namely, that they ought on no account to tax anything produced in and exported from the colony, and that they should encourage to the utmost the industries of the country. There was a long discussion on the previous day about the encouragement of native industries; and this particular industry, which had brought many thousands of men into the country, and had tended so much to its settlement, was the only one that was oppressed by a particular tax. The honorable gentleman spoke of the satisfaction there would have been all along in the mining community had the gold revenue been treated as rates and subsidized accordingly. That question was before the House in 1875, and he ventured to say there was no honorable member who remembered the long and bitter discussions on the question of the abolition of the provinces who was not aware that the proposal to so subsidize that revenue was one which procured a considerable number of votes. There were plenty of Gold Fields members at that time who would certainly have gone against the abolition of the provinces, had they not had the promise that gold-fields revenue—whether from gold duty, miners' rights, or any other source—should be subsidized as were the rates in other parts of the country. He had looked at the Abolition Act to make sure that his recollection of the matter was correct, and in the 15th clause he found that the sources of revenue were "miners' rights, business licenses, or otherwise in respect of the occupation for gold-mining purposes of Crown lands, and the revenues arising within any provincial district under the provisions of 'The Gold Duties Act, 1870,' or 'The Gold Duties Act, 1872.'" These sources of revenue were proposed to be subsidized as rates, after making certain deductions for rents due to the Crown; and it was provided in the same clause that "the balance shall be held, for the purposes of this Act, to be general rates, and shall be paid to the Public Account, and a separate account thereof kept, and such balance shall be paid over to the governing body or bodies of the district from which such revenue has been received, together with any proportionate endowments which may accrue from the Land Fund and from the consolidated revenue, to be computed in the manner provided in the nineteenth and twentieth sections hereof." Under the 19th section it was provided that £1 for £1 should be paid in respect of rates out of the Land Fund, and the 20th section similarly provided that £1 for £1 should be paid out of the Consolidated Fund. The question of subsidies came up for final

settlement in the following year, when the Counties Act was discussed, and these provisions were then left out; and what he wished to point out was this: that when this revenue, which was agreed to be subsidized by Statute, ceased to be subsidized, the West Coast had good cause to complain. They laboured under a sense of injustice. Had the subsidies been paid to them, the districts he had already referred to early in the afternoon would have been quite content to go on. They would have had plenty of money to go on with. But they were shut out. The other districts got the money that had been agreed to be paid, while the mining districts were set aside. Well, he did not see any prospect of getting the subsidies now, and he therefore agreed with the mover of the motion and the mover of the amendment that the time had arrived when this special tax should be abolished. The honorable member for Hokitika spoke about a tax on wool. He should object to that also. They ought not to tax anything of which they had not a monopoly, and they had not a monopoly in the production of either gold or wool. He hoped the resolution would be agreed to, and thus that an end would be put to this tax upon the gold-miners, which had made them more dissatisfied with the Government of the country than anything else they had had to endure.

Mr. GISBORNE hoped the House would pass the resolution with the addition proposed by the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon). He did not think the proposal would be opposed by the Government, because it was not a question which affected the Treasury. He was prepared to vote for the immediate abolition of the gold duty; but he was afraid that a majority of the House would not agree to such a proposal on account of the complication attendant upon it, the revenue being local revenue. If it were put as a practical question,—Ought a duty to be put upon the export of gold for the purposes of colonial revenue?—he thought a majority of the House would say it should not be. Any tax upon the export of raw material was injudicious, and he argued, when the gold fields were first opened up in this colony, that it was an unnecessary tax. There was an idea at the time that immediately a gold field was opened exceptional expenditure was necessary, and that an exceptional tax was necessary in order to recoup that expenditure. He thought that was a mistake. Mining communities were like ordinary communities: they knew how to conduct their own local self-government, which entailed no more expense than the government of any other community in the colony; but this tax, instead of being abolished when the provinces were abolished, was made a source of local revenue. That in itself was an unfair impost upon the miners. They had no property to be rated, and they therefore could not rate themselves as people in other parts of the colony could do. It was not a self-imposed tax: it was a tax imposed upon the miners by the Legislature. It was imposed upon them by external force, whether they liked it or not. And there was this further anomaly: The counties received subsidies on rates to the extent of £2

for £1, and the Road Boards £1 for £1; but in the case of the miners there was no £1 for £1 on gold duty. They had to pay this revenue, for which they received no equivalent; and the result was that the local bodies in the mining counties had not sufficient funds to carry on the duties imposed upon them. This was felt to be particularly hard on the West Coast, because the maintenance of the main lines of road there, which were constructed under the public works policy of 1871-73 as an equivalent for its share of the railway expenditure, was still thrown upon the local bodies, while the maintenance of the railways, which were taken over when the provinces were abolished, was a charge upon the colony. It would therefore be seen that the West Coast had been unjustly treated in three ways. The people had to pay a special tax which was not imposed by themselves, they did not get the £1 for £1 subsidy which other parts of the colony received, and they had to maintain the main roads which were given to them in substitution for railways, while the railways on the East Coast were maintained by the colony. But the whole system of local self-government and the question of subsidies would before long have to receive the serious consideration of any Ministry that occupied the Government benches. Things could not be allowed to go on as they were at present. From all parts of the colony there came a cry for funds for the maintenance of roads and bridges, and funds would have to be found to meet the requirements of that cry. That being the case, he thought the amendment of the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon), which allowed two years to elapse before the abolition took place, should remove any objection on the part of those honorable members who thought that the duty should not be abolished for the sake of the local bodies whose revenue it was. The resolution would merely affirm the principle; the details could be considered when the Bill was introduced to give effect to it. Some understanding might be arrived at by which the duty should be abolished in the different districts at the request of the County Councils or the members representing those districts. He did not say that that could be done in all cases—it might be difficult to do it in contiguous districts—and by the time the abolition took place the House would have had ample time to provide a good and efficient system of local self-government which should be fair to all parts of the colony and adequate to meet their requirements in the shape of the construction and maintenance of main roads. The whole system of local government must receive immediate consideration, if Parliament was to be relieved from the state of demoralization into which it had been thrown by demands for roads and bridges in all parts of the colony. If this state of things continued the House would become a large scrambling shop, in which the only object of members would be to see how much money could be got from it for local works. That was not a proper position for the Parliament to occupy. However, in the meantime, he hoped the motion and amendment would be carried.

Mr. Gisborne

Major ATKINSON would suggest that the debate should be adjourned, as there were some tables which the honorable member for Hokitika desired to have placed on the table, in order to afford time to study the statistics of the question, which returns he had not yet been able to have prepared. He had not been aware that the debate was coming on that day, or he would have endeavoured to have them ready. One had, however, been placed in his hands since the honorable member for Hokitika sat down, and he had just handed it to that honorable gentleman. The honorable member for Totara said correctly that the Government were not directly interested in this question. The gold duty not being general revenue, the Government were merely in the position of representing the local bodies in the matter; but he thought they would not be justified in permitting the vote to pass without calling the attention of the House distinctly to the fact that the gold duty was undoubtedly local revenue, on which local bodies relied to a large extent to carry on necessary works, and that the House should not deal with the question until it was prepared to substitute something for this duty. The proposition of the honorable member for Hokitika was that the whole of the duty should not be removed until 1882; but, as a matter of fact, the House would be depriving the local bodies of half the duty for the current year, when probably they had made engagements for the whole of the year. Clearly the House should not do that without granting special subsidies to those bodies. He did not propose to go into the general question which had been raised by the honorable member for Waima, but he would point out to that honorable gentleman that he was mistaken with regard to the arrangement made for the gold fields under the Abolition of Provinces Act. There was, no doubt, some ambiguity in the clause inserted in the original Act, but before the Act of the following year was passed all the Gold Fields members met him and arranged with him the manner in which they would like to have the gold duty made local revenue. The question was put to them, whether they would desire to stand upon the clause in the existing Act, or have other means adopted; and it was upon their unanimous recommendation that the duty stood as it did now. As the miners themselves would be very much affected if the local bodies had not the means to make roads, he thought it would be well to adjourn the debate until there had been sufficient time to consider how the revenue of the local bodies should be replaced if this duty were abolished.

Mr. GIBBS was ready to agree to the adjournment of the debate, particularly as the amendment before the House put the question in a totally different position from that which he had anticipated. He did not intend that the local bodies should be entirely deprived of this revenue at so early a date as was now proposed. The reduction he proposed was, to his mind, reasonable, and it must be apparent that some means must be provided to meet the wants of the local bodies in the shape of roads and other

works. Until that was done he did not think it would be wise to abolish this duty altogether, and therefore he thought it would be better to adjourn the debate until they knew what provision was likely to be made by the Treasurer.

Mr. SEDDON must say he was never so much astonished as he was at hearing the Colonial Treasurer ask for an adjournment of the debate. This was a question of affirming a principle, and it ought to be debated at once, though he did not think any definite conclusion would be come to at the present time. The question of what was to be given to the local bodies in gold districts when the duty was abolished was a question to be discussed when the Colonial Treasurer brought down his Financial Statement, and did not affect the present question at all. If it was shown that an injustice had been done, that injustice ought to be removed; and it did not require an adjournment until the Government considered how a particular local body would be affected. Delays were dangerous; and now that several speeches had been made in favour of the motion, the Government and others who had for years persistently opposed the abolition of this tax wanted to adjourn the debate, so that the motion might go down and down the Order Paper, and never come up again, like some other motions. As at least two-thirds of the House were in favour of the proposal, he saw no reason for an adjournment. To show still further to the House how great an injustice this tax had inflicted upon the miners he would quote some figures from a return which he had caused to be compiled. The return was not yet complete, but it showed that the amount of duty paid by the miners was—in Auckland, £142,347 3s. 6d.; in Picton, £5,693 19s.; in Nelson, £192,389 12s.; on the West Coast, £281,389 17s.; and in Otago and Southland, £462,997 11s. In other words, the amount of revenue derived by the country from this special tax upon a particular class was, in round numbers, over £1,084,000. If that statement did not convince the House that a great injustice had been done to this particular class of the community, then all he could say was, that no man could be convinced. He trusted the adjournment of the debate would be negatived, and that the debate on his amendment would go on.

Mr. REEVES would certainly oppose the adjournment of this question. It was about one of the most important questions that had come before the House up to the present time. Any honorable gentleman who had any capacity for thinking must see in advance that this opened up a most important question. It certainly did so with regard to the constituency which he had the honor to represent. He was quite aware that the feeling amongst many honorable members was that, when they went into this matter of taking off the duty on gold, some other means must be devised of raising revenue for the counties within which the gold fields existed. He quite agreed with that, and thought the time had arrived when the gold fields should receive that fair share of justice which had hitherto been denied them. All honorable members must be aware that this export duty on gold was a most

iniquitous tax. It had been argued by some honorable members over and over again that because miners broke up the ground, and all that sort of thing, they should be compelled to pay this special tax; but he would ask why, under those circumstances, were not the kauri-gum-diggers called upon to pay 2½ per cent. on what they exported? Did not the same argument apply in that case, and in the case of other industries of the same kind? He said Yes. But he would not support that or anything that would tend towards class legislation. It was altogether a wrong principle to go upon to attempt for one moment to tax our exports, as had been the case with regard to gold for so long a time—so long that, as the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) had said, the miners had contributed in direct taxation £1,084,000 to the revenue. It must be borne in mind that, in addition to having paid this enormous sum to the revenue, the miners had to pay special taxes in other ways. There was no other class of the community that was taxed in the same way. A man had to pay for his miner's right, and for every additional claim that he was in he had to pay for an additional miner's right. Besides paying £1 for his miner's right he had to pay for the registration of the water-race, the head-race, the tail-race, and so on; and then if he wished to have his claim protected for a time he must pay for that also. Further than that, the Government had hitherto been so utterly stupid that they had put every obstacle in the way of the miners' receiving that proper attention to which they were entitled. He had known cases where men had been obliged to travel fifteen, twenty, and twenty-five miles up to their knees in mud, and to swim across creeks and rivers, and then, when they got to their destination, had to wait for a week or a fortnight, and were put to heavy expense, before they could get the title-document which it ought to be in their power to get without the slightest trouble. Of course this question opened up a very wide field for discussion, because the question naturally arose, How were the gold-fields counties to be maintained? Honorable members were well aware that if they turned to the land in gold-fields counties for a revenue it was merely nominal. They were also aware that the value of property in gold-fields counties which could be rated was comparatively very small. To show the work some of those counties had to do, he might instance Inangahua County, a portion of which he and his honorable colleague (Mr. Masters) had the honor to represent. That county had to look after a main road extending from what was called Tophouse down to within ten miles of the Buller, by way of the Hope, and then along from the junction of the Hope and Buller; then there was a jump of ten miles, and from that there was another piece of road which they had to keep in order, from Dee Hill to about four miles below the junction of the Inangahua and Buller; thence to Reefton, and from Reefton to the junction of the Mawhera and Mawhera Iti. Altogether, it embraced 130 miles of road. If they went from Tophouse down to Ten-Mile, he

did not believe the whole amount of rates collected was £10. It did not pay the cost of collection. However, the county, in order to keep within the four corners of the Act, sent a man round to collect the rates at an expense of about 110 per cent. on the amount raised. If the Government which brought about the abolition of the provinces had carried out in their entirety the views expressed by them, the Gold Fields members would not now be coming to the House and asking for a reduction of the gold duty. If the gold-fields revenue from all sources had been treated as ordinary revenue, and subsidized at the rate of £2 for £1, they would now be in a very flourishing condition. However, that promise was ignored, and, further, they were precluded under the Act from taxing mining machinery. Therefore he contended that if they got any more of this gold duty it should be treated as ordinary rates, and subsidized accordingly. He thought any reasonable man with a conscience would agree to that. With regard to making tracks, it was utterly impossible that their poor counties could make tracks, because they had not the means. The Minister of Lands said that a vote would be put on the estimates this year for the purpose of enabling County Councils to make prospecting tracks. That was very desirable and necessary. He suggested that some time ago; and he thought it was even better than a vote for prospecting. In his own district, the other day, the County Council determined to launch out and spend a little money on a track connecting a place with Devil's Creek and Soldiers. In opening this track they came upon a very profitable gold field, and some men were making a regular haul of £20 or £30 a week.

Mr. FINN rose to a point of order. He would respectfully draw attention to the fact that the honorable member had another motion on the Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honorable member could not refer to that motion.

Mr. REEVES said he was taking this last opportunity of airing his eloquence before he was called upon, in terms of his own motion, to pay 1s. per hundred words for all he spoke over a column of *Hansard*. With reference to making tracks, he did not think money could be better spent than upon such works. He now came to the question of main roads. He hoped the Government would see the necessity for taking the maintenance of main roads out of the hands of the counties, or else, as had been suggested, allow them a rate per mile for maintaining the roads. It was utterly impossible for the counties to maintain these roads. He would give an instance: From the Town of Greymouth to Reefton was a distance of fifty-two miles; from Greymouth to Brunner they had seven miles of railway. That was the best-paying line in the colony, which showed the very great necessity for extending the line far beyond where it was now; and he hoped the House would vote a considerable sum for that purpose. The traffic over the road from Brunner to Reefton was something enormous. It passed through a very thickly-populated district, and, in consequence of the very bad state

Mr. Reeves

of the roads at the present time, storekeepers and miners had to pay 10s. a ton carriage for a distance of forty-five miles only. He thought the House would agree that such a state of things should not be allowed to exist, and that it was the duty of the Government to devise some means for taking over the main roads and maintaining them, or else to grant an increased subsidy to the counties for that purpose. He would go further than the honorable member for Collingwood and the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon). He maintained that merely taking 1s. an ounce off the gold duty would not benefit the miner. As the House was aware, the export duty on gold formerly amounted to 2s. 6d. an ounce. On the motion of the late Mr. White, 6d. an ounce was taken off the duty, but the result of that reduction was of no benefit whatever to the miner: he did not receive a penny more for his gold, but the bank got the same price, and consequently the bank pocketed the extra 6d. an ounce. He (Mr. Reeves) thought the same result would follow from the reduction of 1s. an ounce. He would go further than those honorable members to whom he had referred. He would rather say, "Sweep away the duty altogether." The House would then be compelled to make provision for the maintenance of roads. On the West Coast they had not received a fair share of the public revenue for public works. On the East Coast the settlers had railways, which were maintained by the Government; but on the West Coast they were in the unfortunate position of having main trunk roads instead of railways. A portion of his district formerly belonged to the Province of Nelson, and in the neighbourhood of the Town of Nelson they had splendid roads. If inquiry were made, it would be found that the money which was spent upon those roads was largely contributed by the Nelson South-West Gold Fields. Then there was a splendid road between Christchurch and Hokitika. What was now known as the County of Westland made that road. When the County of Westland was separated from Canterbury, the county was saddled with the whole cost of the road, and had to pay the interest and sinking fund. The miners had been taxed in every shape, and they had never received a fair return for that taxation. They now came to the House and asked honorable members to admit that in putting a direct tax on gold they were not treating a large portion of their fellow-colonists in a fair spirit. It could not be denied by any one at all acquainted with the matter that the residents of the gold fields contributed far more extensively to the revenue than any other class in the community. They were large consumers of dutiable goods—they worked hard, and lived on the best—there was not a single thing which the miner used that was not dutiable. With his honorable friend, the member for Hokitika, he believed that the miners were the most self-reliant men in creation. When anything was got up in aid of local institutions, no matter how dull the times were, the miners were always ready to respond. Hospital support and management on the West Coast was

an example which the other parts of the colony might well follow. The people there were always ready to put their hands in their pockets. He remembered when the first hospital was started in Hokitika. A gentleman highly esteemed, and whose abilities were acknowledged everywhere—he alluded to Mr. George Samuel Sale—was acting on the West Coast as Deputy-Superintendent, and he wanted the people to consent to have a hospital under the surveillance of the Government, the Government to support it; but the Westland people objected. They said, "No; we will put our hands into our own pockets. We will rather pay for it than have the Government money if the institution is to be placed under the surveillance of Government officers." The result had been that the hospital was one of the greatest successes in the colony. The same thing applied to the Greymouth Hospital, and also to the hospital at a comparatively small place, Reefton; also to Kumara and Ross. If any sports or amusements were got up for the benefit of the hospitals, money flowed plentifully into the coffers. He trusted the House would take into earnest consideration the amendment of the honorable member for Hokitika, although he would have preferred to see the honorable gentleman go further, and say, "Let us abolish the duty altogether, and have done with it." Had the honorable member done that, he would have got the support of four-fifths of the House.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Half a loaf is better than none.

Mr. REEVES said it was all very well to talk of half a loaf, but a hungry man wanted a whole loaf if he could get it. He trusted the House would give the matter favourable consideration.

Mr. J. B. FISHER hoped the question would not be shelved in the manner proposed by the Government. He thought the tax an iniquitous one, for the simple reason that it taxed industry and production. As had been observed by previous speakers, if it were proposed to put a similar tax upon corn or any other agricultural or pastoral product of the country, no doubt there would be a great howl. The gold produced in the Middle Island was supposed to be worth £3 16s. or £3 17s. per ounce, and upon each ounce the Government imposed a duty of 2s. Now, if upon every £3 17s. worth of corn or wool produced upon the East Coast a similar tax were imposed, a cry would be set up which would not only be heard through the length and breadth of the land, but throughout Christendom. While he recognized that the tax ought to be done away with, he admitted there was a serious difficulty before the House, inasmuch as the gold duty formed a large part of the revenue of counties, for the purpose of making roads, maintaining hospitals, and opening up the country with a view to developing new gold fields. That was a palpable difficulty, and, if the tax were done away with, the Government would undoubtedly have to find a large subsidy for these gold-field counties out of the consolidated revenue, because it was well known, particularly with respect to the West Coast Gold Fields, that the value of landed property was but trifling,

and that, therefore, the revenue derivable from rates was comparatively insignificant. For instance, he knew a county in which a 1s. rate had only yielded £233. But he might remark that there had been a gross breach of faith on the part of the Government—not the present Government, but a previous Government—in respect to a compact made with the Gold Fields members. He had been informed, and he gathered it from the debates on the subject, that at the time of the abolition of provinces there had been a distinct understanding between the Gold Fields members and the Ministry of the day that the gold fields should receive £1 for £1 contribution upon the amount of the revenue raised.

An Hon. MEMBER.—£2 for £1.

Mr. J. B. FISHER.—Well, a subsidy in the proportion of £2 to £1 upon the revenue raised in the district, so as to put them in something like a fair position so far as revenue was concerned. But that arrangement had not been carried out. A great many of the gold fields counties had no land revenue at all; so that they were entirely dependent upon the small revenue they received from local taxation, and if the gold duty were abolished the Government of the colony would have to determine how the necessities of the gold fields could be supplied. It was a very inconvenient thing for the politics of the country that men who came down to represent gold-fields constituencies had to accord party support, not on account of the principles of different parties, but mainly on account of the amount they would be able to seize out of the general revenue for the purpose of constructing roads and bridges in the district they happened to represent. It was quite time that sort of thing should be done away with, and men put in a position in which they could support such principles as their consciences approved, and not be open to such mean influences as bridges, roads, and other things which had influenced them before. As he had already said, there had been a gross breach of faith between the Government and Gold Fields members with reference to the contributions that were to be paid. That arrangement was, he believed, carried out for one year; but subsequently the Government brought down a Bill,—the Financial Arrangements Bill,—under which no provision was made to give effect to that arrangement, the consequence being that the gold fields were left almost without any revenue at all. Speaking for his own district, he knew that there was not sufficient revenue to maintain the ordinary main roads, much less to open up new fields and develop the resources of the country. It had come to his knowledge that there were three or four gold fields in the Buller County which gave every promise of employing a large number of men, and of producing a large amount of gold to the benefit of the colony; but these fields could not be turned to good account because the county had not the means of developing them. At the Karamea there was a good gold field, where men could make £7 or £8 a week, were it not that half the week was taken up in getting

"tucker," owing to a bluff on the road, which it took a day to cross, and which difficulty might be removed at a cost of £500. There were other districts, for instance, the New Creek, only a few miles from the Lyell, which could be opened up for a sum of £300 or £400; and another called Cronadin, close to Charleston, where a large amount of private enterprise had been exhibited, and to which a track could be made at a cost of from £150 to £200. Districts which could be opened up for these small sums were at present lying unproductive, simply because the county had no revenue to develop them. As he had said in asking a question that afternoon, the whole subject must be dealt with by the Government. Sooner or later, they would have to recognize that there were counties which, from their circumstances, could not maintain arterial roads and at the same time find money to develop the resources of the country. He intended to support the amendment, because, taking the whole circumstances into consideration, he thought it would be better to do away with the gold duty altogether. It would be better that the principle should not be recognized of taxing an important industry, than that the counties should derive so small an amount of benefit from this source of revenue. He thought it would be far better that this source of revenue should be done away with altogether, than that the motion of the honorable member for Collingwood should be given effect to, because by adopting that motion they would be rendering the revenue to counties from this source insignificant, while the miners would derive little or no benefit. He would willingly support the amendment.

Mr. FINN said that, as a Gold Fields member, he desired to say a few words upon the motion before the House. In his opinion, the miners were the heaviest-taxed people in New Zealand. Probably some honorable members did not know how they were taxed. He would tell them as briefly as possible. In the first instance, before a miner could seek for gold he must obtain a miner's right, for which he paid £1. He had to travel, perhaps, forty or sixty miles to the Warden's Office to procure the miner's right. Under the miner's right he could mark off one acre of land; but the possession of the miner's right did not give him any title to the land—it only gave him the right to mine for gold. If he desired to have a survey of the land made, as miners generally did, he had sometimes to pay £9 or £10 for such survey. That was considered to be a great injustice to the miners. Considering that on the gold fields there were a large number of Government surveyors, the least the Government could do would be to direct their officers to make the necessary surveys, the persons requiring such surveys to pay the actual expenses incurred. He thought that would be reasonable. Under "The Land-Tax Act, 1878," the mining industries were taxed. He would give an instance of one company in his district—the Tipperary Gold-Mining Company. It commenced operations eighteen months ago. It had seven acres of land, and had to pay a tax on £10,000, the amount at which it was valued. That was certainly a great

injustice, and he would support any measures which would exempt miners and their properties from heavy or oppressive taxation. Then under the Mines Act a lease for a water right could not be obtained under a cost of £6 or £7, as the Act made it compulsory to advertise. The honorable member for Hokitika had made reference to the banks, and stated that some arrangement had been made between the banks of the colony for keeping down the price of gold. The only way in which the Government could overcome that difficulty would be by buying the gold from the miners, paying them a fair price for it. The Government could at once convert it into coin, or otherwise dispose of it to the banks, as they thought advisable. He thought it would be far better, instead of taxing the miners as at present, that some encouragement should be given to them. Unless some encouragement was given to them, the revenue of this colony would be diminished to a great extent. Reference had been made to the quantity and value of gold produced for exportation up to the present time. He found, by the return, that from the gold field from which he came the Government had received gold duty to the amount of £294,677 7s. 6d. That amount had been paid by the miners. He would ask, had anything been given in return for that money? He would say that nothing whatever had been given in return for it. He would prefer seeing the Government introduce a Bill providing for the abolition of the gold duty, and would certainly give such a measure his support; but until such was done he would support the reduction.

Mr. SPEIGHT would have liked to have seen the debate adjourned, for this reason: that certain returns which had been asked for connected with the subject should be laid on the table before the House proceeded to the discussion of this question. The question was, whether the abolition of the gold duty, or the gradual reduction of it, was what the country desired. In past sessions there had always been Gold Fields members who supported the maintenance of this duty for colonial reasons primarily, and then for local reasons. Such members were now few in the House. The main reason he had heard advanced by those gentlemen was that, as the gold duty was now practically applied to local purposes, it ought therefore to be continued. If it had not been for the fact that it was given to local bodies, he believed the duty would have been abolished long since. There were no two opinions upon the injustice of the duty. It was in every sense an unjust and exceptional tax—a tax which no other industry in the country would submit to. Such a tax on any other industry would be resented by any other class in the community. The circumstances which originally gave rise to the imposition of the tax had completely changed. Under the present circumstances they were not justified in retaining the duty in its present form. The statement that as it was applied to local purposes it should be continued would not bear examination, and for this reason: At the time of the abolition of the provinces, it was understood that a subsidy would be given to local bodies of £2 for

every £1 raised locally from rates and from gold duty accruing in the localities. That arrangement had not been adhered to. That was one reason why the duty should be abolished. There was, to his mind, a still stronger reason: while the gold duty continued it would be absolutely impossible for the local bodies to obtain the power to rate mining property in their respective localities. Those who knew anything of gold-fields townships would know that in a large number of instances a very great proportion indeed of a township was gold-mining property, and therefore could not be rated. The rates which would be levied on these properties were lost to the local bodies, as also the subsidies that would be payable upon those rates. For that reason, the duty was no benefit to the localities. Again, to a large extent the gold duty raised was to be applied to gold-mining purposes, and was not available for the purpose of making roads. It was frequently given as aid to prospectors, and for carrying on mining operations, so that the localities were at a dead loss in the matter. He thought the arguments used by honorable gentlemen had covered all the points that might be taken upon the subject. In his opinion the sooner the duty was abolished the better it would be for the colony, for then the people would be brought face to face with the question as to how the roads, bridges, and other works in the various localities were to be maintained.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR hoped the adjournment of the debate would be allowed. A time could be fixed for resuming it.

Debate adjourned.

LAND TRANSFER BILL.

Mr. BRANDON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it had generally been supposed that a person who held a certificate of title held what he might term the key to the title—that was to say, that no one had the right to deal with the land without his concurrence, whether he was the owner named in the certificate of title or not. It had been found by experience that that was not the case, and that some Registrars were in the habit of accepting and recording transfers, although the certificate of title might be in the hands of persons other than the owner. It was true that, under the Act of 1870, the Registrar had power to dispense with the production of the certificate if the owner had not deposited it as security for a loan. He therefore proposed that, before registering the transfer, the Registrar should require the transferor or party dealing with the land to make affidavit that the certificate has been destroyed or lost, and that he had not transferred or dealt with the land otherwise than as in the transfer proposed to be registered, and that he had not deposited such certificate, grant, or other document as security for any loan. That would prevent any unfair dealing with the land. Then, in order to supply an omission in the Act of 1870, the Bill provided that the Registrar should give at least fourteen days' notice in a newspaper published in the principal town of the district in which the land is situated, and also in the *Government Gazette*, of his in-

tention to register the proposed transfer. This would be a further protection against fraud. The object of the next clause was to restore to the mortgagee the right—if there was any default in the payment of principal or interest, and if he found that he could not, by sale in the ordinary way, realize the amount due to him—to apply to the Registrar to conduct the sale; and if at that sale he could not realize the principal and interest, and whatever costs he might be put to, he might himself become the purchaser and hold the land, just as if he had foreclosed. He was prohibited under the Land Transfer Act of 1876 from doing so, and the Bill would give him this very proper power. These were the objects of the Bill, and he now moved the second reading.

Mr. KELLY inquired whether the Bill had been referred to the Attorney-General.

Mr. HALL said the Bill had not yet been referred to the Attorney-General, as it had only recently been distributed. He listened attentively to the honorable gentleman's explanation of the 2nd clause, which seemed to contain a very desirable provision. The 3rd clause was of such a technical character that he would not express any opinion upon it; but, if the House read the Bill a second time, he would take care that it was referred to the Attorney-General before it went into Committee.

Mr. BRANDON explained that the Bill had been in the hands of the Attorney-General for a few days, and he had not yet received intimation of any objection to it.

Bill read a second time.

LICENSING BILL (No. 1).

Mr. ACTON ADAMS, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it originated with those who were licensed victuallers, who, from being compelled to pay higher license fees in different parts of the colony, desired that a measure of this kind should be introduced in order to remove what they conceived to be a great injustice. For the past two years several efforts had been made by licensed victuallers to remedy this injustice, and the Government had more than once promised to bring in a general Licensing Bill, which, among other things, would provide for the classification of license fees. However, Government had not been able to bring forward any general measure affecting the licensing question as a whole, and he was now speaking as a private member on behalf of a number of licensed victuallers. This Bill only dealt with the matter of fees. The whole principle was confined to the classification of licenses and the making the fees uniform. When he read to the House the fees that were in force in the different provincial districts he thought honorable members would recognize the necessity for introducing such a measure as this. In Auckland the license fee was £40; in Hawke's Bay, £25 for a ten-o'clock license, and £40 for a twelve-o'clock license; in Wellington, £40 for a twelve-o'clock license; in Nelson, £50 for a twelve-o'clock, and £40 for an eleven-o'clock license; in Canterbury, £30 for a twelve-o'clock license; in Otago, £25 for a twelve-o'clock license, and £20 for a ten-o'clock

license. So that honorable gentlemen would see that in Nelson the publicans had to pay exactly double what the publicans in Otago had to pay as a fee; the probabilities, too, being that the Otago publican would do a very much greater trade than the publican in Nelson was likely to do. This was simply the result of the provincial system, and, however strongly many honorable members might have held to the question of the existence of provincial institutions, he would point out that this was the first new Parliament that had met since the abolition of the provinces. He therefore appealed to honorable members, however gallantly they struggled for the principle while possible to maintain it, to endeavour now with him to obtain uniform laws throughout the colony. Up to the year 1873, the whole of the licensing question was dealt with by provincial laws; but in that year it was found necessary to make general provisions providing for the mode of applying for and granting licenses. Therefore, in the years 1873 and 1874, the General Legislature dealt with that question, leaving, however, the question of fees open, as they were provincial revenue. The licensed victuallers had been considering this question for some time. The Auckland and Nelson publicans had petitioned the House this session with reference to the matter, and by letters received from Otago he was informed that the Otago licensed victuallers were not unfriendly to his proposition, though it might necessitate their having to pay a slightly higher fee than at present. There was at the present moment a meeting of the representatives of the publicans throughout the colony being held in Wellington, and he hoped, before he asked for the committal of the Bill, that the result of their deliberations would be placed before the House. It might be raised as an objection to the Bill that these fees belonged to the local bodies; but he did not for a moment think the local bodies would interfere with a measure of this kind. Of course, no local body would be more affected by this Bill than the City Council of Nelson, inasmuch as the fees there were higher than anywhere else; there would, therefore, be a greater loss upon each license in the City of Nelson than in any other part of the colony. He had represented this to the City Council of Nelson, and asked them to inform him of their views; and he held in his hand a resolution passed by that body within the last few days. It was to this effect:—

“That this Council approves of the measures contained in the Licensing Amendment Bill introduced at the present session of Parliament by Mr. Acton Adams, providing for the classification of licenses and an uniform scale of license fees as follows: Twelve-o’clock license, £35; eleven o’clock license, £25; country licenses, £20; accommodation and ferry licenses, not to exceed £10. And that a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Town Clerk to Mr. Adams.”

With this resolution he felt sure the other local bodies would concur. He had heard of no dissent, and that might be taken as some evidence that there was none. He was sure no local body would like to see the same class of men taxed higher in one place than in another—it would be so mani-

festly unfair. He would be prepared to discuss the details of the Bill when they went into Committee. He would simply state now that the Bill continued the present system of granting licenses as specified in the existing Acts, and divided the publicans’ licenses into four classes. That was already done to a great extent in the different provincial districts, and he was only carrying out the same principle in a more accurate shape in his Bill. The duties and liabilities of publicans, so far as related to the conduct of their houses, were not altered. If there were any great difference of opinion as to clause 6, which provided for the hours for which publichouses were to be kept open, he would be willing to leave that question until it could be dealt with by the Government, or some more influential member than himself. The duration of licenses was at present regulated by clause 39 of the general Act of 1874, which left it to the Provincial Legislatures to fix the duration. As he contended that it was desirable the duration of licenses should be uniform throughout the colony, he had introduced a clause with that view. He thought it was very desirable that publichouses should be kept open for the same time in different places, so that travellers, wherever they went, might always understand when they could get admission. As to the amount of fees which he proposed, he thought he had indicated a fair compromise between the higher and lower rates; but he was not bound to any particular rate, and would be ready to yield £5 one way or the other, so as to secure uniformity. He thought he had framed his Bill so that it should recommend itself to the House, and he felt sure honorable members would be ready to remove what was looked upon as a great injustice by a large and influential trade in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER said there might appear to be some difficulty as to putting the question of the second reading of this Bill, because it proposed to increase certain license fees, and that was a proposal which should emanate from the Government, and not from a private member. However, the objection was not so great in this case as to induce him to refuse to put the question of the second reading, leaving the question of increasing the fees to be dealt with in the Committee on the Bill.

Mr. STEWART would like to ask the honorable member in charge of the Bill whether it was intended that, when a person had once paid, say, £10 for a license, he was to retain that license ever after; as the provision in the Bill seemed to read in that way.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS said the general Licensing Acts of 1873 and 1874 provided that the licenses should be taken out yearly, and his Bill did not alter that provision.

Mr. STEWART said this Bill provided for making the license fee simply £10: that was to say, a person would be entitled to a license for £10. He apprehended that would hold good for ever.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS would refer his honorable and learned friend to the Act of 1873, which provided that the fees paid in respect to any license were to be regulated by Act of the Pro-

Mr. Acton Adams

vincial Council, as settled in other parts of the Act.

Mr. HALL said it was high time that the law with regard to publicans' licenses should be revised. As one of the Licensing Commissioners for a country district in Canterbury, he found great difficulty in carrying out the law, on account of the number of Acts through which it was scattered. It was a very great pity that the question had not been taken up by the Government before now, but he was afraid that during the present session it would not be possible for the Government to deal with the matter as it required. In the meantime, the grievance this Bill proposed to redress was one very much felt, and therefore, if the House could not deal with the whole subject this session, it might take up the question of equalizing the license fees throughout the colony. There was no reason whatever why a publican should pay more in Auckland than in Otago, or more in Nelson than in Canterbury. The principle of the Bill he was in favour of, but there were one or two features which would require consideration in Committee. The honorable member proposed that the fees for town licenses should be £25, and for country licenses £20. Those fees were not very different from the fees charged for the same licenses under existing laws. Then the Bill went on to provide for "accommodation licenses," for which the charge would only be £10, and an accommodation license was described as a license outside a city or borough, where the business done under such license principally consisted of accommodation for travellers. Under that head, he contended that nine-tenths or nineteen-twentieths of the hotels outside the boundaries of boroughs would obtain their licenses. Practically, therefore, the Bill would reduce fees for all kinds of country licenses to £10. If the honorable gentleman only intended to charge £10 for such licenses as used in the Canterbury Province to be called "accommodation licenses"—meaning licenses which it was optional for Justices to grant in cases where there was very little traffic, and where it was very desirable to have an accommodation-house—he thought the intention would have to be made clearer. He believed the charge for bottle licenses was rather high. The 8th clause appeared to make a considerable alteration in the law on the vexed question of travellers. At present, the law was, that no person should be considered a traveller unless he resided more than three miles from the house in which he obtained drink. In this clause, the framer of the Bill had entirely done away with that provision, and a man might claim to be a traveller if he only resided a couple of hundred yards away from the public-house. He was afraid that would not be at all desirable. Another provision appeared to be still more objectionable. It laid the onus of proving that a man was not a traveller upon the prosecutor. It was proverbially difficult to prove a negative, and it would be exceedingly difficult for the police to prove that a particular individual was not a traveller. He hoped his honorable friend would reconsider this clause. He thought the principle of the Bill was good—namely, that it was desir-

able to equalize publicans' license fees throughout the colony.

Mr. GIBBORNE said they had heard a great deal about the wishes of the licensed victuallers, but he would like to hear something about the wishes of the local bodies to which the license fees were paid. Of course, it would be agreeable for the licensed victuallers to have equal fees, if in most cases they were made less than at present. Then, the Bill provided that ferry licenses should be only £1. In some cases a person might be willing to pay £50 for a ferry license. Did the Bill mean that ferry licenses should be only £1? He could not see any very great principle involved in this equalization of license fees. When they had provincial institutions, each province was able to decide what license fees should be charged in its own district, and the fees were paid without any remonstrance, as far as he understood, from the licensed victuallers. Now that provincial institutions were destroyed, it was said that everybody ought to pay an equal license fee throughout the colony, and the House would have a perfect right to give effect to that if they received the revenue. But, as they were paying this as local revenue, they should consult the local bodies before they affirmed the principle, because that principle, if carried out, might injuriously affect certain local bodies.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE said the honorable member for Totara saw no great advantage in equalizing the license fees because they were county revenue. But the licensing districts were not continuous with the county boundaries, and the present law was highly unjust to publicans in some counties. For instance, in his own electoral district—which was only part of a county—the Licensing Bench, for reasons best known to themselves, fixed the whole of the licenses in that district at £30, while a man could get a license in the next licensing district, only divided by an imaginary line, for half the money. That was one of the reasons why the people in the Nelson District were dissatisfied with the licensing laws as they at present existed. If the licensing districts were continuous with the counties, he did not know that the people of Nelson would have any great objection to the law as it existed. He was not clear whether it would not be well to make the licensing districts much larger, so that people in a county could decide whether the fees should be equal throughout the county or the colony. His own opinion was that they should be equalized throughout the colony. There were some things in the Bill which he did not altogether approve of, but they could be discussed in Committee.

Mr. TOLE intended to support the second reading of the Bill. His honorable friend who introduced it did him the honor to submit the Bill to him in manuscript. The honorable gentleman did so, he presumed, because he had intimated to the honorable member that he had been communicated with by the licensed victuallers in Auckland, who felt extreme interest in the question, as they had suffered more than the publicans of any other part of the colony from the imposition of heavy license fees. At the present

time the House was called upon to affirm the principle of the Bill, which was to equalize license fees throughout the colony. A greater number of classes of licenses were enumerated in this Bill than they had in Auckland, and he thought some of them might be done away with, as there was an inordinate encouragement to the liquor traffic. Section 6 of this Bill permitted the sale of liquor on Sundays. He was not altogether clear that that was a judicious provision. They could not legally sell liquor on Sundays in Auckland, except to *bona fide* travellers. Still, he did not think it was right to have this unrestricted liberty of sale imported. Perhaps the clause of the honorable member for Cheviot might be incorporated, and the sale of liquor, unless to travellers, prohibited on Sundays. He was himself responsible for the next two clauses, which he inserted with the permission of the honorable member for Nelson City. Those were with regard to lamps, and the interpretation of the expression "*bona fide* traveller." The publicans of Auckland considered it a great hardship to be compelled to burn lamps all night. In some parts of the colony, he understood, the law was that publicans were obliged only to keep their lamps lighted until closing hours; but in Auckland they were obliged to keep them lighted from sunset to sunrise. This was undoubtedly a great hardship, which entailed expense on the licensee which was not necessary, and conferred no great benefit on the public. Therefore he proposed to insert that clause, which would meet the case. With respect to the interpretation of the words "*bona fide* traveller," he had framed the clause almost *verbatim* from a judgment by Judge Gillies, in Auckland. The judgment would be found in the *New Zealand Herald* of the 27th January, 1877, and he had followed closely the words used there. That was a case on appeal, where a man who called himself a *bona fide* traveller rowed five miles in a boat on the Kaipara River, for the purpose of getting a bottle of grog. He pulled back immediately, and had not passed the hotel; and the question arose whether the man was a *bona fide* traveller. There was a conviction by the magistrate, which was sustained under the circumstances. He was held to be a *bona fide* traveller. The words used were precisely the same as those contained in the judgment. The Hon. the Premier had referred to the difficulty of proving a negative which he said was involved in the proviso to clause 8: "Provided that *prima facie* proof of the defendant not being a *bona fide* traveller shall be given by or on behalf of the prosecution in all proceedings." But it would be seen that the object of that was simply to secure that there should be slight proof of non-travellership before the defendant was put to the necessity of proving that the purchaser was a *bona fide* traveller—proof such as, if uncontradicted, would satisfy magistrates to convict. Mr. Justice Gillies thought that that would be better, under the circumstances. The proviso merely required that there should be *prima facie* evidence given of the non-travellership. He (Mr. Tole) thought it was a proper proceeding on the part of the House to equalize the license fees; and he believed

Mr. Tole

advantage should be taken of the present occasion to affirm the principle by allowing the Bill to go to its second reading. He felt sure the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill would accept suggestions in Committee, so that the wishes of the House in other respects might be expressed in the Bill.

Mr. SPEIGHT altogether objected to the principle of the Bill as expressed in many of the clauses. The honorable member for Eden said there was a general agreement that there ought to be an equalization of the license fees; but, while he might agree with that, he did not think the general feeling was in favour of equalizing the fees by reducing them all to a minimum. On the contrary, he thought there was a strong feeling that the fees should be increased to a maximum, and in that respect he strongly objected to the proposition contained in the Bill. The objection of the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) to the sweeping character of the 3rd clause was a very fair one. That clause provided that "all the provisions of the said Acts and of all Provincial Acts which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, particularly the provisions relating to the fees payable for licenses." Now, former Acts provided that license fees should be paid annually, but there was no such provision in this Bill, and the assumption was that, if a man once got a license, he might hold it in perpetuity without paying any further fee. The main principle contained in this Bill appeared to be that of Sunday trading, and the question of equalizing the fees occupied a very subordinate position. If the honorable gentleman was willing to allow clause 6 to drop out of the Bill altogether, he might have no difficulty in passing the second reading; but, if he still held to that clause, it was not probable that the Bill would get through. With regard to clause 7, which did away with the necessity for publicans lighting lamps, he did not suppose it mattered very much whether the lamps were lighted or not. The lights seemed to represent different meanings to different persons. Some thought a light was needed at the publichouses to show where they were to persons who wanted to get liquor; while others regarded the lights as beacons to warn persons who wished to avoid the publichouses. It was a plan adopted by local bodies, when they were digging up roads, to put lights up to warn people of pitfalls; and so he supposed one of the objects of these lights was to point out the publichouses as places to be avoided. However, he did not think it mattered much whether the lights were there or not; but, as regarded clause 8, of which the honorable member for Eden had taken charge, he (Mr. Speight) regarded it as a most pernicious clause, because, if it meant anything, it meant this: that any person could be a traveller. "*Bona fide* traveller shall mean any person travelling for business, for pleasure, for health, for recreation, or for any other purpose to which the obtaining of liquor is merely ancillary." An honorable member had just shown him a definition of the word "ancillary" as used here, and the meaning here was said to be something like this—getting drink when going to see the

servant-maid. That was a definition to be found in the dictionary; but he took it for granted that the word as used in the Bill meant "something subordinate." This would be the effect of the clause, though: that any person could get liquor if, on the plea of being a traveller, he chose to leave the precincts of his house; and that was most objectionable. The Premier had raised a very important point as to the Bill throwing upon the wrong person the onus of proof as to travellership, and he (Mr. Speight) hoped sincerely that the clause would not pass in its present shape. He would ask if the honorable member meant to go through with the 6th clause. If he confined his attention to the question of fees, he (Mr. Speight) would not offer any particular opposition; but he should certainly oppose the Bill very strongly, if the 6th clause were persisted in.

Mr. PITT should support the second reading of the Bill, because he was in favour of the important principle it contained. He thought it was a great pity that after the abolition of the provinces the Government of the day did not think it their duty to take up this question of the generalization of the licensing laws. At present he supposed that, with the Provincial Acts, which were in force in the colony, and the Acts of the General Assembly, relating to licensing, there must be at least fifteen or sixteen licensing laws in force in various parts of the colony. He did not think that should be. It appeared, from a question that had been put by his colleague (Mr. Acton Adams) to the late Government, that the reason why the late Government objected to take up this matter was that it would interfere with the revenue of the counties and municipalities; but he thought the mover of the Bill had shown that one municipality, at all events, which would be a loser by this measure becoming law, was in favour of the principle which the Bill sought to establish. He thought the Bill would require amendment in Committee, for, although the 5th section dealt with the fee to be payable for a bottle license, yet he thought it would be an important matter to define what a bottle license was. What was called a bottle license only existed in particular provincial districts, and it would be necessary to make provision so that the Act should be made general in that respect. As to the 6th clause, providing for the hours during which publichouses should be allowed to be kept open on Sundays, he could not pledge himself at present to vote for that. He was inclined to vote for the clause in the Bill introduced by the honorable member for Cheviot, dealing with the point, and he had reason to think that the licensed victuallers themselves would not be averse to Sunday traffic being done away with. They and their employes looked forward to the holiday as well as anybody else, and he thought it would be unreasonable to suppose that keeping open publichouses on Sundays was for the benefit of the publican, though no doubt provision must be made for *bona fide* travellers. As regards the question of lights, dealt with in the 7th section, to which the honorable member for Auckland City East had taken some exception, he might point out that under the general law lights were

required to be burned for the purpose chiefly of directing travellers who were benighted—that was, in the country districts. So far as the cities and towns were concerned there was no necessity for lights; because there was not the slightest doubt that any person could easily find an hotel if he were so inclined, and it was not necessary to put hotelkeepers to the great expense of burning lights where lights were already provided at the expense of the ratepayers. He trusted that, before the House met again next session, the Government of the day would take the whole subject of the licensing laws of the colony into their serious consideration. He thought there were many amendments required which were not provided for either in the Bill of the honorable member for Cheviot, or in that now under discussion. There was one matter on which he felt somewhat strongly. He thought that the constitution of the Licensing Benches required amendment, and that provision should be made for changing the Licensing Commissioners from time to time. He thought, also, that some provision should be made for the extension of districts, but that might be done by the provision in the Bill of the honorable member for Cheviot. Provision was also required so as to give a right of appeal from the decision of a Licensing Bench. Their decision might have the effect possibly of ruining a man, yet he had no appeal; and, on the other hand, licenses might be very indiscreetly granted by a Bench. There ought to be a right of appeal on either side, and it would cut both ways. The matter was worth consideration, and he hoped it would receive attention at the hands of the Government if they intended to consider the question. Certainly he did not think it was a task which could fairly be expected of a private member to take up such a large question of social reform as the licensing laws, and he hoped that, in the calm after the political storm which might be expected to come, the Government of the day, whoever they might be, would take up this and other matters of social reform urgently needed, and put them upon a basis satisfactory to the country.

Mr. SAUNDERS entirely agreed with the last speaker. He had never thought this Bill or the Bill he had introduced was comprehensive, or at all exhaustive, in dealing with the licensing system, and he only hoped that the principle of local option would be recognized this session, and that whatever Government was in office would feel it their duty to deal fully with the whole subject next session. He hardly knew how to speak upon this Bill, because it seemed to be difficult to ascertain what its principle was. If he were called upon to say what the main principle was, he should say it was a Bill to promote intoxication on Sundays. There was one thing in the Bill that he liked, and that was, the classification of licenses and the differential charges made for those licenses. That, he thought, was an amendment upon the measure he had brought in. But with regard to the other provisions of this Bill, he objected to them entirely. He might say, with regard to the proposal that the publichouses should be kept open for two hours on

Sundays, and be practically continued open all day on Sundays for the purpose of suiting the convenience of all persons who chose to call themselves travellers—and there was nothing in the Bill to prevent any one calling himself a traveller—it was, in fact, opening publichouses for Sunday trading, and would throw serious temptation in the way of many honest, hard-working men from which they were now exempt; and the consequence would be to deprive them of many advantages which they now possessed. He was sure that nothing would practically destroy the enjoyment of the Sunday to both the husband and the wife so much as to know that these houses were all accessible, and that the husband might go and get drunk in any of them at any hour on Sunday. He thought it would be most objectionable to open publichouses for two hours on Sundays; but under this Bill they would be practically open the whole day. He hoped the House would not sanction anything of that kind. It would be absolutely impossible for the police to prosecute at all under the provisions of this measure. It would be impossible to prove that any person was not a traveller. Then, with regard to the amount to be charged for licenses, he did not see that it would beneficially affect any one to reduce the license fees. So far as the publicans themselves were concerned, they would not be benefited in the slightest degree by that. He questioned if they would not be more benefited by increasing the license fees. In the former case there would be a wider field for competition, and the effect would rather be to increase the number of publichouses. Their legislation should tend, on the contrary, in the direction of lessening the number of these houses, and improving their character as much as possible. For the same reason, there would be no advantage in lessening the cost of lighting, and, with regard to the lights, he thought it desirable that these houses should be lighted throughout the whole of the night. He thought it would be an improvement if the light were of a distinctive colour, so as to distinguish it from other lights in different parts of the town, so that publichouses might be easily recognized. They always heard that these houses were open at all hours of the night for travellers. At no time of the night was a light so desirable as when the house was closed, so that travellers might find from the light where to knock persons up and to obtain the accommodation they required. As some publichouses would be resorts for deeds of darkness to a very great extent, it was very desirable that those publichouses should be kept in the full blaze of light during the whole night, as darkness was everywhere found to facilitate crime. With the single exception of the classification of license fees, there was nothing in this Bill of which he approved, and therefore he should vote against the second reading.

Colonel TRIMBLE said if this Bill went into Committee he had so many objections to make against it that, if they were allowed, but a small portion of the Bill would be left. With regard to the classification of the license fees, he thought it would be desirable to simplify them and have

but two classes of fees throughout the colony. In Taranaki the town license was £30, and the country license £15. In this Bill he found there were so many different fees that he really quite agreed with those gentlemen who said that when a publican came to take out a license it was very difficult indeed to know which fee should be paid. If the Bill got into Committee, he would ask for an amendment with regard to the fees. Then, with regard to Sunday trade, he did not look upon it with the dislike some gentlemen had expressed themselves as feeling. He thought the privilege of being able to get a glass of beer or a glass of any other liquor on a Sunday was an advantage. He had himself, in Scotland, suffered from the inconvenience of being deprived of the opportunity of getting a glass of beer on Sunday. He now came to the question of *bona fide* travellers; and here they entered upon a path which would only end in confusion. That provision was absurd, and could not possibly be carried out satisfactorily. The last clause of the Bill said that "the expression '*bona fide* traveller' shall mean any person travelling for business, for pleasure, for health, for recreation, or for any other lawful purpose to which the obtaining of liquor is merely ancillary." He entirely agreed with those gentlemen who said that that would lead to endless confusion. The question would be settled, not by a Judge of the Supreme Court, as a rule, but by an ordinary magistrate, and he ventured to say that most of the cases would end in dismissal. As a rule, that would be the case. In the Bill considered last night he thought there was a clause which defined in much better and simpler terms what a *bona fide* traveller was. It was there stated that a man travelling five miles was considered a *bona fide* traveller. With regard to the *bona fide*-traveller definition, perhaps they would allow him to give the result of his experience in trying to arrive at what a *bona fide* traveller was. Until Mr. Cross's Act was passed in 1874, there was no definition of what a *bona fide* traveller was. It was then defined that a person travelling three miles from home, or travelling from station to station by railway, was a *bona fide* traveller. Now, many persons travelling one single mile by rail were considered *bona fide* travellers for the day. Travelling for three miles was no hardship, because they could hardly take a walk into the country without travelling three miles, so that there they had at once a *bona fide* traveller. They should either render the law prohibitory within certain hours for all classes of persons except those who were actually living in the place and so served with drink, or else let the houses be open altogether on Sunday. At the time Mr. Cross's Bill was being discussed, he (Colonel Trimble) was asked for an opinion upon the *bona fide*-traveller clause. He had obtained some statistics as to publichouses in a country district. He would give the House the substantial result. The police counted the number of persons who went into the publichouses during prohibited hours on a certain Sunday in the month of March, 1874. Those persons were all represented to be *bona fide* travellers. As many as 498 persons went into one publichouse on the

pretence of being *bond fide* travellers, and in not one of these cases were the police able to interfere. Two other publichouses in the same district were watched on the same day. The result was, that within four of one thousand persons went into the three publichouses as *bond fide* travellers—one thousand hypocrites had gone into those houses on that day. He thought, in order to work the law properly, the *bond fide*-traveller clause should be abolished altogether. As he said before, there would be very little left in the Bill if all his objections were given effect to. Anything in it of which he approved might be embodied in the Bill of the honorable member for Cheviot. This Bill might be sent to the same Committee as the Bill of the honorable member for Cheviot would be sent to, so that there might be but one measure. The fewer Acts there were on this subject the better.

Captain RUSSELL said the great objection he had to this Bill mainly consisted in this: that in the preamble it stated that it was a Bill to amend four separate licensing Acts, and if it became law they would next session have a Bill introduced to amend five licensing Acts. As a matter of fact, this Bill was simply to stave off the real question of licensing until the following year. Admitting, as he did frankly, that the evils of the present licensing system were very considerable, he did not think them very materially provided against in this measure. The great misfortune was the innumerable Statutes in the Statute Books, all bearing upon the one subject. For that reason—if it were the only reason—he would object to the passing of this Bill. He did not at all agree with the honorable member for Grey and Bell, that it would be advisable to let this Bill go to a second reading. The provision relating to *bond fide* travellers was quite absurd. Were they to suppose that the publicans in the large towns should have the right of deciding whether a man was a *bond fide* traveller or not? The fact of whether a man was a *bond fide* traveller or not was absolutely ignored by every person who kept a publichouse. It was not often his fate to have to go to a publichouse on a Sunday, but if he did so he usually found the place crowded with persons who lived in the immediate neighbourhood. Of course he did not mean to say there was any more harm in going into a publichouse on Sunday than on any other day: it would be simply preposterous to pretend that it was so. He should like to see the provisions of the Act so stringent that the houses should be kept decent at all times, and, if that were so, he did not see why they should not be open at any time on Sunday. When the general Licensing Bill came up for consideration he should endeavour to have a clause inserted providing that a publican charged and convicted of having a certain number of cases of drunkenness in his house within a certain period, should be deprived of his license. It should not be left to the discretion of the Licensing Bench or the Inspector of Police. If a certain number of cases were proved against a publican during a certain time, the license should *ipso facto* lapse, and he should not have the power of obtaining a license again during a definite time.

He believed in the principle of local option, and would do his best to support a workable Local Option Bill. There was no use in tinkering with this matter. Until a thorough and comprehensive measure came before them on this subject they should merely add a clause to the Bill which would effectually prevent drunkenness in publichouses. When the time came he should support a Bill to regulate that; but this Bill could not do any possible good, and therefore he deemed it to be his duty to oppose it.

Mr. HUTCHISON said it seemed unfair that in some portions of the colony people should be called upon to pay more for licenses than in others; but this did not involve a principle of so much importance as to induce him to support the second reading of this Bill—at all events until he knew whether it was a levelling-up or a levelling-down in the licensing fees that was contemplated. This was a question of very great importance to local bodies. To the local body in the city of which he had the honor to be one of the representatives, if the license fees were fixed at £25, as mentioned in the Bill, it would be a loss of something like £1,000, and unless the Treasurer was prepared to say that he would recoup the city to that amount he did not see that they should be called upon to reduce the fees. There had never been, so far as he was aware, a single complaint regarding the fee paid for a license in Wellington, whatever might have been the case elsewhere. He quite agreed with the honorable member for Cheviot that it was not desirable, in the interests either of respectable licensees or of the public at large, that the fee should be reduced. Those publicans who were doing a respectable trade were not anxious that the license fee should be reduced to any small sum. In dealing with this question at large, as he hoped they would soon do, it was a matter of very great importance that they should recognize the desirableness of lifting this traffic out of the mud and mire into which it had fallen so much, and of making the trade a more respectable one than it was now. Therefore, until he had some assurance that the honorable gentleman who proposed this measure was prepared to equalize the licenses by making them such a sum as he had indicated—say, £40 for boroughs and cities—he could not vote for the second reading of the Bill. He quite agreed that licenses other than city or borough licenses should be reduced, but until he had some such assurance as he had indicated he should object to the second reading, more especially as the Bill proposed not to compel the publicans any longer to keep a gas-lamp over their doors. He could not see that there was any great necessity to ask them to do this in the larger cities of the colony; but, if they had not to incur this expense, it would be a still further reduction in favour of the publicans of £10 a year, or something like that. This ought to be taken into account when they were talking about equalizing the licensing fees. The question of bottle licenses was one which affected, or was supposed to affect, to a large extent the morals of the people, and therefore it was a thing which was not to be entertained until after very con-

siderable deliberation. In his particular locality there was no such thing as bottle licenses. It was tried in the locality for twelve months when it was a province, and its operation was found to be rather injurious; the Act sanctioning it was therefore repealed. He did not know whether they were to understand from the fact of this provision being inserted in the Bill that bottle licenses were to be granted all over the colony, or whether the provision was only to apply to those districts where the system already existed. He did not think that in the Wellington District they would care to have anything to do with these bottle licenses. There was some difference of opinion on the subject, and it required a great deal of consideration. Then, with regard to packet licenses—the licenses given to steamers trading along the coast. They talked about shutting the publichouses on Sundays, and he held that that was a very proper thing to do. He was not then speaking on religious grounds in saying this. But, when they did shut up the publichouses on Sundays, three or four, or, perhaps, half a dozen steamers lying at the wharf were doing a roaring trade, and that, too, without any restrictions. People went down the wharf, walked on board the steamers, and had drink there. He knew this was done every Sunday in the year. Before these licenses were granted there should be some inquiry, he thought, on this particular point. The honorable member for Cheviot agreed with the opening of publichouses at six in the morning. He thought it was a pity to make the publican, who did not get to bed until late at night, get up so early in the morning. A publichouse was not a very inviting place at so early an hour, and washing and scrubbing was generally going on until eight o'clock. It would be quite early enough if the publican began business at nine o'clock. When the Bill came to be discussed in Committee he should take that view. As to the *bonâ fide* traveller, like the honorable member for Grey and Bell, he gave him up altogether. He did not care what definition they gave to the *bonâ fide* traveller, he would drive any number of coaches through whatever they did to define him. There was no use trying to describe him in any terms—he was certain to escape. The only way of dealing effectually with this part of the question was by having their social feelings so elevated that they would get above such a state of things as a man going into a publichouse and pretending to be what he was not. There was one thing mentioned by the honorable member for Grey and Bell which he was glad to hear. He was glad to hear the honorable member speak as he did with regard to publichouses being closed on Sundays in Scotland. The charge generally made against his countrymen was that, whilst they pretended to shut up the publichouses on Sundays, they were practically open, and people got drunk—more drunk than on any other day in the week. He was glad to hear that such was not the case, and that drink could not be had on Sundays. Keeping publichouses shut here on Sundays would have the same effect, and he thought it would be well to keep them shut.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that perhaps the

Mr. Hutchison

honorable member would allow him to explain. He did not say that drink could not be obtained in Scotland on Sundays, for he never in his life saw so many drunken people as he did in Glasgow on the Sunday referred to.

Mr. HUTCHISON said his witness had broken down, and as he had broken down he was afraid to say much more. He was going to oppose the second reading of this Bill on account of this very doubtful principle of reducing the license fee to £25. He wanted to see the fee £40, which, he insisted, was a very proper amount. There was no objection to it, so far as he was aware; and he did not think the Government could possibly agree to reduce the revenue of boroughs—say that of Wellington by £1,000—“at one fell swoop,” without making some provision for their being recouped to that amount. There was no demand for such a reduction—he believed that not a single licensed victualler cared for it—and he submitted that such a piece of legislation as was now proposed could not be afforded.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR said he was not going to speak upon the merits of the Bill, as Mr. Speaker had indicated that perhaps it was not in order, as it proposed to levy taxation. In Otago holders of bush licenses paid £10 at present, and, coming under the denomination of country licenses, they would be raised to a possible £20.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS.—They would come in as accommodation licenses.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR said they might either come in as accommodation licenses or as country licenses. He had always understood that any Bill increasing taxation could not be brought in by a private member of the House, and, although this taxation was localized, still it would be levied under the Act, and must be regarded in the same light as revenue raised through the Custom House. He thought, under these circumstances, it did not much matter whether the Bill was read a second time or not. The discussion had been a very valuable one. For his own part, if a division were called for, he should vote against the principle contained in the 6th clause. He was informed by the late Superintendent of Otago that bush licenses there were £5, so that the increase of taxation in that respect was still heavier.

Mr. FULTON wished to say a word on this subject, being the representative of a district in which a large number of licenses were issued, and having had a good deal to do with the issuing of those licenses. This matter with regard to licensing seemed to be taken up by gentlemen mostly representing the Nelson Provincial District. The present Acts established the permissive principle, and, in view of the general measure which it was said the Government was going to bring down, he would suggest to the mover of the second reading whether it would not be as well to make this measure a permissive one, applicable to Nelson, or any other districts that might wish to have it in operation. The Bill was one which very seriously affected the district in which he was a Licensing Commissioner. As had been said by the honorable gentleman who had just sat down, the bush license which they

had in Otago, and which was represented by the accommodation license in the Bill, was only £5. The bottle license, which was put down in this Bill at £25, was there only £10. While speaking about the bottle license, he might say that there had been frequent expressions of opinion, not only by the Licensing Bench in Dunedin, but by many of the magistrates who had sat there during the last twenty-five years, to the effect that that license had been most pernicious in its operation. For himself, he would gladly see it abolished altogether. There were many other matters which required attention, but he was not aware that the Dunedin District, of which he was a Licensing Commissioner, or, indeed, any portion of the Provincial District of Otago, desired any amendment of the law in this direction; nor had the matter been brought before them in order that they might express an opinion. In view of these and other matters which required amendment, and which he would be prepared to go into if the Bill went into Committee, he would throw out the suggestion that the measure should be made permissive in its character, so that it could be taken advantage of by those districts which desired it, and not be forced on every part of the country as was proposed.

Mr. TAINUI wished to say a few words about the Bill before the House. When it was in Committee he would vote that the licenses should be equalized in both Islands. The Maoris saw the evil that resulted from the sale of spirituous liquors. They saw that both the white people and the Maoris were injured. The Natives of the Middle Island wished to exclude liquor from their districts, and he had a petition from them requesting that it should be prohibited. They saw that there were great evils in it, for it not only inflicted injury on the individual, but also on the race. Therefore the Natives of the other Island were very determined in their attempts to put a stop to the sale of liquor in their districts. He could not ask that it should be prohibited altogether, but he would like it stopped as much as possible. If the House should prohibit the sale of liquors in their districts the Natives of the other Island, at any rate, would be very glad to hear of it. He would certainly vote that the amount paid for licenses should be equalized in the different districts, for he could see that this was a good Bill, and would bring good both to the Natives and to the white people.

Mr. STEWART said it was his intention to move that this Bill be read a second time that day six months. It was likely, if passed, to create more confusion in the licensing laws than at present prevailed. The licensing laws throughout the colony were in a state of chaos, and as far as Otago was concerned it was a most difficult thing to get anything like a knowledge of the licensing laws in force in that part of the country. This Bill seemed to have been the joint work of two lawyers, and he confessed that its provisions did not appear to have been drawn with very great care. Whatever its intention might be, the effect would be, in the first place, to repeal all provisions as to fees in the former Acts, and to

make a license perpetual, for there were no qualifying words to show that the fees were to be paid periodically. He also thought that the classification of the licenses was unnecessarily cumbrous, and that more simple definitions might be given to the different kinds of licenses which it was intended to issue. He would submit, also, that it was very unwise to interfere with local revenue. A license in Dunedin was worth more to an hotel-keeper than one in a small town. A publican might be prepared to pay £100 for a license in one of the large cities, while he could not afford to pay anything like that sum in a sparsely-populated place. Therefore he thought there had not been much wisdom displayed in adjusting the fees for licenses. He could not make anything out of the definition of a "ferry license," which was described as "a license applied for on the terms of keeping a ferry, or keeping in repair any roads or bridges adjacent to such house." Was it intended that it should be a condition to a man's obtaining a license that he should keep a ferry or keep in repair any road or bridge adjacent to his house? The subsection was certainly ambiguous. Clause 7 stated,—

"In cities and towns lighted at the expense of the ratepayers, it shall not be necessary henceforth for a licensed person to keep a light burning at night in front of his premises, except in cases where there is no public lamp kept burning in the street or place where such premises are situate."

Now, that would practically mean that there would be no lights at all over hotels, because, as long as there was a light in the same street, even a mile distant, the hotelkeeper, under this clause, would not be required to burn a light. With regard to the *bond-fide*-traveller question, he agreed with the remarks of the honorable member for Grey and Bell and of the honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutchison). In some places the plan was adopted of providing that a person who had travelled a certain distance should be held to be a *bond fide* traveller: in some Statutes the distance was five miles. But it would be necessary to have something more definite than the description of a "*bond fide* traveller" given in clause 8 of this Bill. He submitted that the Bill was not calculated to do very much good, but, on the contrary, was likely, if passed, to create a great deal of difficulty, being, as he had pointed out, in a very imperfect state. Under these circumstances, he would move, That this Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. TAWHAI said that, after the Bill had passed the second reading, he would give his vote in the direction he thought proper. What he wished was that all the licenses throughout New Zealand should be fixed at £25. He also thought that the wholesale licenses should be put a stop to, because he knew that some of those who held wholesale licenses sold to the Natives, and he should therefore like to see the wholesale licenses abolished in Native districts. He should like to see licenses granted which would compel the holders to provide accommodation. The teetotalers and others who did not drink should pay a license fee.

Mr. ANDREWS believed he expressed the general feeling of the House when he said that he hoped the debate would be adjourned. He objected to questions of this character being dealt with in this awkward, upside-down sort of way. They should be dealt with by the Government. The House should affirm certain principles and leave it to the Government to bring down a good, sound, workable Bill. He should like to see the question dealt with in this way: The House should say, "It is desirable that the Government should, during the recess, take steps to equalize the license fees;" it should then affirm the principle of local option, decide the question of Sunday trading, and define the meaning of the word "traveller." In that way they would arrive at something in the nature of practical legislation. He would not waste the time of the House in discussing this Bill, because if they were to waste their time in discussing questions brought up in this awkward way they would never get through the business of the session.

Mr. LONDON agreed with the honorable member for the Northern Maori District that the wholesale licenses were very objectionable. Men came down from the bush, and, being unable to get a single bottle at these wholesale stores, they had to buy two gallons. They got no accommodation, and, having this large supply of spirits, they seldom got back to their homes before they had lost all their money. Besides the loss of money, there was sometimes great loss of life, for, in returning to their homes in boats from the wholesale stores, as many of them did, fatal accidents resulted. Then, again, those who did not immediately return home went to the houses of their friends, who sent for fresh supplies as soon as the two gallons were gone, and the result was something frightful. The publichouses were bound down under certain restrictions to provide proper accommodation for their customers; but the wholesale stores provided no accommodation whatever. He would like to see a clause inserted to abolish the wholesale licenses in country districts, where the publichouses were usually well kept.

Mr. MURRAY moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS hoped the debate would not be adjourned. He felt bound to say that some of the arguments adduced had been urged in a very fair and reasonable spirit; but he thought he should be able to show that many of them had been used in forgetfulness—he could not say ignorance—of the present licensing law. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) said there was nothing in the Bill that applied to the duration of the licenses, and he therefore wished the House to infer that the licenses granted under it would last to all eternity. There was a great deal of difference between the duration of the licenses and the fees payable. The duration of the licenses was fixed by the 7th section of the Act of 1873, which stated that "such licenses shall be in force from the time of granting the same until the thirtieth day of June next ensuing, and no longer." By section 22 of the amended Act of 1874 it was provided that—

Mr. Tawhai

"All certificates authorizing the issue of any license which shall or may be granted at any quarterly licensing meeting under this Act in the month of June in any year, shall entitle the holders thereof to the license mentioned in such certificate, and such license shall be dated on the first day of July next ensuing."

Those were the clauses relating to the duration of licenses. The clause which referred to the fees—which, he contended, was an entirely distinct matter—was the 32nd clause of the Act of 1873, which said that "Any fees payable in respect of any certificate or license issued under this Act shall be such, and payable to such person, as may be, or may have been, directed by any Act of any Provincial Council." It was clear that there was a wide difference between the duration of the licenses and the fees payable. Another objection raised was that the Bill dealt with bottle licenses for the first time; and it was also said that the bottle license was not distinctly defined. Now, the bottle license was the creation of the present general law, and a bottle license was defined by section 17 of the Act of 1874 in these words:—

"A bottle license shall be in the form in the Schedule hereto marked A or to the effect thereof, and shall authorize the holder thereof to sell and dispose of any alcoholic liquors in bottles corked and sealed, capped or wired, of sizes not less than those of which six or twelve are usually reckoned to the gallon, and not to be drunk in or upon the house or premises for which such license is granted."

In answer to honorable members who said that this bottle-license clause was not in force in the district from which they came, he would point out that the proviso to the present law was in these words:—

"Provided that the provisions of the said Act and this Act relating to bottle licenses shall only apply and be of force in such provinces as may have provided, or shall hereafter provide, for the grant and issue of such licenses."

He said nothing in his Bill about bringing bottle licenses into provinces where they were not already in force. All he did was to regulate the fees in places where the system was already in existence. He trusted, after saying that, those honorable gentlemen who were going to vote against the Bill on that ground would see that their objections were not well founded, and would join with him in the general principle of equalization of licenses. With regard to the Premier's remarks as to the definition of accommodation-houses, he could assure that honorable gentleman and others that he had himself felt the difficulty of defining those words very much. The Bill had been revised by many persons besides himself, and the words now in the Bill were those which they had finally decided upon as the best. He was not, however, prepared to affirm that this was the best definition that could be arrived at, and if honorable members would help him to a better he would gladly accept it. The design in providing for these particular licenses was to grant them to persons who had accommodation-houses on main roads at great distances from centres of population. These houses were

exceedingly useful to travellers of that class who would not expend more than ten shillings for the night for themselves and horse; and very little liquor was consumed in them. The licensees of these houses should therefore not be compelled to pay as high a fee as the holders of houses in towns and suburban villages. It was quite clear, also, that some provision should be made for these houses, because they were probably the most useful class of houses in the colony. Honorable members must recollect that, even in the state of civilization at which we had arrived, it would be impossible to travel through New Zealand without these houses. Old settlers would recognize the truth of what he said, and would agree with him as to the necessity of having these accommodation-houses. The honorable member for Totara said the local bodies which were so much affected by the Bill ought to be heard. The honorable gentleman must have been absent or asleep when he (Mr. Adams) was moving the second reading, or he would have heard him read a resolution passed by the local body which would be most affected by the Bill, and which nevertheless approved of it. He had also pointed out that, although many local bodies would be affected, still it was not to be presumed that any local body in New Zealand would want to stick to a partial and unjust law simply because they benefited slightly by it. He was sure they would recognize the duty of establishing equal laws from north to south of New Zealand, and would refuse to be parties to imposing a tax upon some persons of a class, which was not attempted to be imposed upon others of the same class. The answer to the honorable member for Totara was this: that the licensed victuallers had been agitating during the last two years with regard to this question, and the Government had been asked during the last two sessions whether they would not bring forward a Bill to deal with the matter. Constant correspondence between the licensed victuallers had been going on, meetings had been held, and the question had been frequently referred to in the Press; and yet no representative of a local body, although they must have known of this agitation, had attempted to stand up and oppose the Bill he was now introducing on the part of the licensed victuallers. The honorable member for Eden said there were too many classes of publichouses provided for. No doubt there were a good many classes, but they were no creation of his. Under the present law provision was made for bottle licenses, packet licenses, wholesale licenses, and publicans' licenses; and he had simply fixed the fees for each of these classes, and had divided the last—the publicans' licenses—into four. As he had observed in moving the second reading, he had only done what had already been done in almost every province. Honorable members knew very well that in almost every province the holders of licenses in large towns paid more than those in country districts. Even the honorable member for Grey and Bell recognized that there was a distinction in his province—Taranaki; and in Nelson there were already divisions somewhat similar to those in the Bill. In Otago, again, the largest province

in the colony, the number of classes of licenses was, he believed, greater than in this Bill. If, however, honorable members thought they could divide the licenses fairly into fewer classes he would be ready to consider the matter. He was not bound to any particular number. If honorable members would let the Bill be read a second time, he was not bound to any particular part, further than the equalization of fees. That was the only principle which he asked the House to affirm, and he promised to give any objections to other parts the fullest consideration in Committee. Some honorable members had said, and truly said, that this was a Bill which should have been introduced by the Government. He heartily concurred in that opinion, and before he ventured to move in the matter his predecessor, Mr. Curtis, asked the Government, last session, whether they would introduce such a Bill, and they refused. Again this session he himself asked the Government whether they were prepared to bring down such a measure, because it would come far better from the Government than from a private member; and the reply was that they would not. Then it fell to him to introduce a Bill which only remedied the salient points in which injustice had been done. He did not pretend, as a private member, to go into the broader question of the morality of licensed houses, because it was too large a question for him to grapple in that capacity. He had therefore confined himself to the equalization of fees; and, rather than that the publicans should undergo any longer the injustice from which they had been suffering, he would forego the latter clauses of the Bill, about which so much had been said. He would like, however, to say a few words with regard to selling liquor on Sundays. If honorable members would consider the matter, and would look, as he had looked, at the local provincial laws, they would find that greater liberty now existed in most of the provinces with respect to the sale of liquor on Sundays than he proposed. Therefore he asked those who were opposed to Sunday trade to go with him, with a view to going further hereafter. All he proposed by this Bill was to allow the publican to dispose of liquor during the dinner and supper hours on Sunday—one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. To his mind, it would be a great piece of injustice if they were to forbid the poorer classes, who could not afford to keep beer in their cellars as the richer classes did, to send to the publichouse for their dinner or supper beer. An hour in the morning and an hour in the evening was certainly a very limited time for supplying this beer. Then, because it was provided that *bond fide* travellers and lodgers could be supplied with liquor at all reasonable times, those who were opposed to the second reading of the Bill assumed, wrongly, that it contemplated keeping publichouses open on Sundays. That was a very great mistake. What the clause said was that *bond fide* travellers and lodgers might be supplied with liquor at all reasonable times. It was simply permissive, and the publican might refuse to supply the liquor if he chose; but, if persons were living in the house, and were dining, say,

at two o'clock—a not unreasonable hour on Sunday—then the publican could, under the clause in the Bill, supply them with liquor during the meal. Unless there was a clause of that kind in the Bill, every lodger in a publichouse must dine between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, and sup between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, or else he must dine and sup without his beer. As to the question of who was a *bond fide* traveller, he admitted—and he spoke as a lawyer, who had some knowledge of the matter—that it was very difficult to define a *bond fide* traveller. He agreed with the honorable and learned member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) that the legal difficulties with regard to this matter were considerable; but he was inclined to think that the clause which the honorable member for Eden had the credit of drafting was a better clause in many respects than the existing law either in England or in this colony. In England the hard-and-fast rule was, that you must walk three miles before you could have your beer on Sunday. Having been in London for some time himself, he knew that many people there prolonged their Sunday walk in order to get a glass of beer at the end of it. The distance had nothing to do with the matter at all. The principle of the clause was, that the getting of the beer must be ancillary to the person's travelling—that must not be the dominant reason; it must be subservient or subordinate to it. He thought it was better to leave it to be decided upon by the magistrate. He would point out to honorable members who lived in country districts that on Sundays very many of the country residents took a ride into town as a matter of recreation. They sometimes rode twenty-five miles. They went out not to get liquor—probably, and especially on stations, they would leave liquor at home—but on the road they would perhaps get thirsty and want a glass of beer, and he did not see why they should not have a glass of beer in an ordinary and peaceful way. If honorable members refused to agree to the Bill, the consequence might be that a man would ride forty or fifty miles on a Sunday, and it would be impossible for him to obtain a glass of beer during that time. He would also point out, to honorable members who might have some feeling for animals, that, if a man did not get his glass of beer, he would not give his horse a feed. He would now address himself to the honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutchison), whose vote he claimed. That honorable member spoke of liquor being supplied on Sundays to persons on board steamers. He said that steamers in port carried on a drinking trade all day long. That was certainly very improper on Sunday, but he would point out that under the existing laws that was the case, and not only when in port, but when at sea, liquor could be supplied to persons on board steamers at all hours. That was most improper, whether at sea or in port. It rendered steamers more like drinking saloons, and his experience of travelling in steamers made him wish very often that on Sundays persons were doing something else rather than gathering together in the saloon and, as it was called in the colony,

Mr. Acton Adams

“liquoring up.” He claimed the vote of the honorable member for Wellington City on the ground that under this Bill liquor would only be supplied on board steamers within the particular hours named, because this Bill applied to all licenses, whereas the restrictions in other Acts did not apply to steamers' licenses. He had endeavoured in this Bill to keep clear of the general question. He might have spoken for hours on the subject of local option, but he had confined himself to equalizing the license fees, and he hoped the House would read the Bill a second time. Those clauses which were objected to could be struck out in Committee. All he asked for was, that the general principle of the Bill should be affirmed, and, if honorable members refused to affirm that principle, they would be continuing a state of thing which was excessively unfair and unjust to a very large number of people throughout the colony.

Mr. MURRAY asked leave to withdraw his amendment for the adjournment of the debate. He moved the amendment in order to let the honorable gentleman down lightly, but he had not accepted the chance.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. TURNBULL wished to state the reasons why he should vote against the second reading of this Bill. The honorable member in charge of the Bill said that it would equalize the license fees; but it did not do so. It would still leave the old provincial laws in existence, which was a fatal mistake. But the most important point in reference to this was, that there was no doubt whatever that in any financial arrangements which would be made this year the whole of those fees would be required to go into the general fund. So far as the Bill itself was concerned, he thought the fees for the country were fixed rather high. Some explanation was required with regard to clause 8, which provided,—

“In the construction of the licensing law, including the said Acts, the expression ‘*bond fide* traveller’ shall mean any person travelling for business, for pleasure, for health, for recreation, or for any other lawful purpose to which the obtaining of liquor is merely ancillary.”

He scarcely understood what the term meant. Were they to go and seek the servant-maid when they wanted a glass of beer, or were they to take the servant-maid for the purpose? He scarcely saw the purport of that particular clause. It appeared to him to be a fatal mistake in the Bill that it made no provision for dealing with houses which were mere drinking-shops. The Bill appeared to be a piecemeal arrangement, and would come better from the Government in a proper form.

Motion made, and question proposed, “That the word ‘now’ stand part of the question;” upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	...	33
Noes	...	...	...	...	26
					—
Majority for	...	...	...	...	7
					—

AYES.

Major Atkinson,
Mr. Bain,
Captain Colbeck,
Mr. Hall,
Mr. Hamlin,
Major Harris,
Mr. W. J. Hurst,
Mr. Hursthouse,
Mr. Johnston,
Mr. Kelly,
Mr. Levin,
Mr. London,
Mr. McCaughan,
Mr. McLean,
Mr. Moss,
Mr. Ormond,
Mr. Pitt,

Mr. Richmond,
Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Shephard,
Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Sutton,
Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Tawhai,
Major Te Wheoro,
Mr. Tole,
Mr. Tomoana,
Mr. Whitaker,
Mr. Whyte,
Major Willis.

Tellers.

Mr. Acton Adams,
Colonel Trimble.

NOES.

Mr. Allwright,
Mr. Ballance,
Mr. Barron,
Mr. De Lautour,
Mr. Dick,
Mr. Finn,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,
Mr. George,
Mr. Gisborne,
Mr. Hislop,
Mr. Hutchison,
Mr. Ireland,
Mr. Macandrew,
Mr. Mason,

Mr. Masters,
Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Pyke,
Captain Russell,
Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Shrimski,
Mr. Speight,
Mr. Tainui,
Mr. Thomson,
Mr. Turnbull.

Tellers.

Mr. Andrews,
Mr. Murray.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR inquired when Mr. Speaker would give his ruling as to whether this Bill was in order.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had already expressed his opinion that one of the clauses, so far as it tended to increase the license fees, would not be in order; but it would be the duty of the Chairman of Committees to direct the Committee's attention to that fact. He would notify to the Chairman of Committees his opinion, and see if he concurred in it. It was not competent for a private member to propose additional taxation.

Mr. PITT asked if any defect of that sort could not be cured by the Government, on behalf of the Crown, signifying their assent to the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER, speaking off-hand, thought it might be so; but he would give the matter further consideration, and apprise the House of his opinion.

ASHBURTON COUNTY COUNCIL WATERWORKS BILL.

Mr. WRIGHT, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said its object was to empower the County Council of Ashburton to take measures to bring a supply of water from the Ashburton River or other sources for the service of the settlers on the plains. It also empowered them to raise a sum of £100,000, and to provide interest and sinking fund by means of an acreage rate. The Bill was altogether of a permissive character, and could not be brought into operation without the consent of a majority both in number and value of the

ratepayers concerned. The reason for introducing the Bill was this: The wells over this tract of country were carried to a great depth—from 50 to 260 feet—and were, moreover, very uncertain. The settlers had expended large sums of money in their efforts to obtain supplies of water, and by no means with success. As much as £1,000 had been spent by a single individual. As an indication of the necessity for this measure, he might state that those settlers who had sunk the largest sums of money in their efforts to obtain a supply of water were those most earnest in their advocacy of this Bill. The measure had been discussed in five different centres of population, and in only one of these was it objected to. The cost to the settlers under the present system of carting water from the rivers was so great that in many instances it was equal to a second rental. In some cases the cost amounted to 4s. per acre for carting water to enable men to get in their crops. As an earnest of the importance of this work he might state that the Ashburton County Council had made a grant in aid to the extent of £10,000. As soon as this measure was passed they would be able to expend this sum, and give employment to many persons now out of employment. The district to which the provisions of this Bill might be applied embraced an area of something like 350,000 acres, and the settlers had paid something approaching the sum of £700,000 in the purchase of their properties in that district. He simply stated these few facts in order that honorable members might have a fair idea of the magnitude of the interests at stake. The Bill asked for no endowments in the shape of either land or money. It was simply a measure to enable the settlers to improve their property by insuring a sufficient supply of water for their household purposes and for their stock. Without a sufficient supply of water the development of the district would be very much retarded. Inasmuch as the proposal tended to promote the welfare of so large a tract of country, embracing 300,000 or 400,000 acres, it would to a certain extent promote the welfare of the colony at large. He hoped honorable members would see their way to pass the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR had drawn the attention of the honorable member in charge of the Bill to the constitution of a special Court proposed in the Bill. He thought such a Court would be very inconvenient, particularly as it was intended to clothe it with very great powers, especially the powers of commitment for contempt of Court, which were dangerous even when placed in the hands of the Supreme Court. It seemed to him that the County Council might very well act as a Court of Revision, or the Registration Officer could act fully as well; but the proposal to establish a separate Court to revise the roll of ratepayers for a portion of the county seemed to him absurd. The Bill referred to a Revising Officer. In the Government Bill, there would be no such officer as a Revising Officer. However, the whole question could be considered in Committee. When the Bill was committed, he would ask the honorable member to accept some amendment that would prevent the creation of any

judicial Court of such a small nature, but which was clothed with such large powers.

Mr. WRIGHT had no doubt he would be able to meet the honorable member's views when the Bill was under consideration in Committee.

Mr. HUTCHISON did not object to the second reading of the Bill; but he had a suggestion to offer. While he thought local bodies ought to have power to manage their own affairs without seeking the advice of any other parties, there was a want of uniformity in the proposed mode of raising the loan. He would suggest that it was desirable that there should be one uniform rule with regard to loans by local bodies. Clause 143 of the Municipal Corporations Act provided,—

"If the number of votes given for the proposal exceeds the number given against it by one-fifth, or more than one-fifth, of the latter, the resolution in favour of the proposal shall be deemed to be carried."

It would have been better if the honorable member had introduced the whole clause with reference to borrowing contained in the Municipal Corporations Act, so as to obtain uniformity in this respect. He also agreed with the honorable member for Mount Ida in thinking that the setting up of such Courts was rather a serious innovation in the Bill. It might form a precedent for the setting up of little Courts of this kind anywhere in the colony. He was not stating these matters in the way of opposition to the Bill. He thought it was a proper measure; and perhaps these objections could be better discussed in Committee. But he submitted that the setting up of such a Revision Court was a matter which ought to receive ample consideration before being conceded to. It would involve a principle of some consequence, which it would be a pity for the House to affirm without more consideration than they had given to it at the present time.

Bill read a second time.

PRIVILEGE.

Mr. REEVES.—Before the next Order of the day is called on, I rise to a question of privilege. I have received a letter from a gentleman who was at one time a member of this House, and who is frequently to be seen in the lobbies and at the doors of the House. I may mention that it has been reported—I have heard so with some feelings of annoyance—that I had deserted my party, and was going over to the other side. I have received this letter, and have sent a reply to it. With the permission of the House I will read it. I consider it a breach of privilege, and I think you, Sir, will rule that it is so. The letter is as follows:—

"Government Buildings.

"DEAR REEVES,—Whatever may be my views and feelings *in re* parties in the House, you will, I know, believe me when I tell you that the interest I feel in the district you represent is far above all party considerations. I would therefore very much like—for your own credit with your constituents, and in the interests of your constituents themselves—to see you turn over before the no-confidence motion is taken, as you

Mr. De Loutour

will then occupy a much more influential position with the present Ministerial party than you would by joining them afterwards. I am assured, on the most reliable authority, that the Government are sure to win. For the reasons above stated, I wish you would give the matter your serious consideration. You will be good enough to forgive my writing you on this matter, for be assured that my only object in doing so is to suggest what, in my opinion, would be the best course both for yourself and your constituents.—Yours faithfully,
"CHARLES WOOLCOCK."

This is my reply to it:—

"Wellington, 23rd October, 1879.

"SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this afternoon, and am not surprised at the nature of the suggestion you therein make. For treachery, duplicity, and moral turpitude I have never seen a parallel to your proposition in the same amount of words. It is a fitting commentary on your political life. I propose to read this correspondence to the House to-night.—Yours, in disgust,
"RICHARD REEVES."

"C. Woolcock, Esq."

I will lay the correspondence on the table, and honorable members can take any action they like upon it.

Mr. MURRAY.—Is it a private and confidential communication?

Mr. REEVES.—No; it is headed "Government Buildings."

Mr. SPEAKER.—The rule is, that when a member raises a question of privilege he should conclude by making some motion.

Mr. REEVES.—I move, That the correspondence be laid on the table.

Mr. HALL.—The House should pause before it entertains a proposal to lay on the table a private letter, which, whatever it may be, is certainly not a breach of privilege. It is neither more nor less than a private letter. The honorable member may have his opinion about it; but, in my opinion, it contains very good advice, although the honorable gentleman does not appreciate it. The letter is no breach of privilege whatever. Other honorable members may have received letters of the same sort, and if they were all laid on the table it would groan with them. I think the course adopted by the honorable member in reading these letters forms a very bad precedent. His motion seems a jocular proposal, and the letter cannot be considered a breach of privilege.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I do not think it is a jocular proposal. Mr. Woolcock was a member of this House, during the last Parliament. He is now no longer a member of the House; but he is constantly standing at the door, button-holing honorable members, and asking them whether they intend voting for or against the Government. It is time the House took some steps to stop such conduct.

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is no question before the House, and any discussion is irregular.

Mr. PYKE.—There is a question—That the letter be laid on the table.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I understood the honorable gentleman, in concluding his observations, to

state that he did not intend making any motion, but would leave the matter in the hands of the House.

Mr. REEVES.—Pardon me, Sir: I moved that the letter be laid on the table.

Mr. SPEAKER.—As no motion has yet been proposed from the chair, I may be permitted to say that I do not think it would be worthy of the House to take notice of this matter.

Mr. PYKE.—The question is, whether the correspondence should be laid on the table. It is only fair to my honorable friend the member for Grey Valley to say that he is entitled to look upon this letter as a semi-official communication, inasmuch as it is dated from Government Buildings; and I have no doubt in my own mind that it was inspired by some authority. There is nothing wrong in laying this letter before the House, or in reading it. I look upon it as an improper attempt to influence the action of an honorable member of this House; but I would advise the honorable member not to insist upon laying this letter on the table of the House, as it is giving far too much importance to an inconspicuous individual.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I do not wish to take part in this discussion, but I think it would be well if honorable members were left to take their own action in regard to any matters coming before this House, and were not subjected to outside influences or intimidation of this kind, which are inspired from sources they ought not to come from—the same source which causes telegrams to be sent to members of this House who are trying to do their duty, asking them to act in a contrary direction. If this communication have no other effect, it will show those gentlemen who may inspire such things that they cannot possibly hope to attain their ends by such unworthy means.

RESIDENT MAGISTRATES ACT 1867 AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. PITT, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he would not detain the House at any length. The Bill contained a single clause, and the object of this short measure was to enable corporations to sue in a Resident Magistrate's Court defendants residing out of the Magistrate's district. As the law stood at present, before a summons could be issued against a defendant residing out of the district, it was necessary for the plaintiff to depose on oath to certain matters. Now, a Judge of the Supreme Court had decided that such affidavit could not be made on behalf of a corporation. It was therefore important, for the benefit of mining companies and corporations, that this defect should be remedied. Numerous suggestions had been made by honorable members as to amendments required in the Resident Magistrates Act; but he had introduced this Bill to meet a special defect in the law, and he did not consider it the duty of a private member to attempt to remedy all the deficiencies in the present Resident Magistrates Acts. The honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutchison) had communicated certain additional clauses, which he intended to move in Committee.

Mr. HALL hoped the additional clauses referred to would be communicated to the Government beforehand.

Mr. STEWART said he, too, had several amendments which he should like to make in this Bill in Committee. He was not quite sure whether this Bill was necessary, because he had no doubt whatever that a liberal interpretation of the Act, read in the light of the Interpretation Act, would have enabled a company to sue in a Magistrate's Court as any individual could do.

Mr. HUTCHISON said he intended to give notice of the amendments which he should propose.

Mr. SPEAKER said, in that case, these amendments would appear on the Supplementary Order Paper.

Bill read a second time.

WELLINGTON HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

Mr. LEVIN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, would ask the indulgence of the House while he endeavoured to explain the objects of the Bill and the circumstances which occasioned its introduction. He might premise by saying that this measure was identical in all respects with the Bill that was placed before the House last session by Mr. Barton, who was then one of the members for Wellington City. Unfortunately, owing to the short duration of the session, it did not reach a further stage than the first reading. The object of the Bill was to establish a Harbour Board for the Port of Wellington. It was to consist of eleven members, of whom four were to be non-elective and seven elective. The framers of the Bill had aimed at opening the Board to all the elements interested, so that all classes of the community concerned might have an opportunity of taking part in the harbour administration. Power to borrow £100,000 was sought for, so that the Board might be able to acquire the Queen's Wharf and the bonded warehouse from the present holders, provided they were willing to sell; and, if acquired, that they might have the means at their command to provide the much-needed extension and alterations to the existing wharf. He might explain that the Queen's Wharf and the warehouse were the property of the Corporation of Wellington, having been acquired by them from the late Provincial Government. Practically the Corporation were the wharfingers of this port. He believed that they had done all in their power, and as much as the means at their command allowed, to provide for the increasing trade of the port; but he contended that what they had done had been utterly insufficient, and that the best interests, not alone of the port, but of the city and surrounding districts, had suffered by their not possessing the same facilities for loading and discharging vessels as were enjoyed by other ports of the colony. It had been for some considerable time apparent to those interested in the advancement of the city as a commercial emporium that the existing state of things must, if possible, be altered; that, if they were not up and stirring, they would be overtaken and beaten

by their neighbours, who, although not endowed by Nature, yet by artificial means were fast making their harbours more attractive. He appealed to honorable members who were in the habit of coming to Wellington for years past, and would ask them if in Wellington, so far as the port was concerned, they had kept pace with the times. If they expected the Corporation to give the increased accommodation that was needful, they would be disappointed, not from want of will on the part of the Corporation, but literally from want of means. It was felt that an independent Harbour Board should be constituted; and the City Council themselves were of this opinion, for, although they declined to initiate such a measure as he now proposed for the acceptance of the House, they had passed a resolution saying that they would offer no opposition to the introduction of the Bill. He would say no more now beyond this: He contended that, in asking the House to support the measure now before them, he asked them to aid in a colonial work; for he ventured to say that an Act which should have for its object the raising of this port to its natural position as the receiving and distributing port of Cook Strait and the neighbouring settlements would be of advantage not only to Wellington itself, but to those ports and places brought into connection with it. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHISON said it was an exceedingly awkward thing for himself, and also for his colleague, that he was obliged to oppose the second reading of this Bill. He was quite sure he was going to address a House prepossessed against him, but at the same time he thought he should be able to state his case in such a manner that the House would see very strong reasons for concluding that there was no necessity whatever for the institution of the proposed Harbour Board in Wellington. He started with a general principle. He did not know that general principles were very much cared for by members of that House, but this was a general principle which was really of very great importance in this matter. It was now becoming acknowledged by thinkers that one single Board for any locality was better than three or four small Boards; that one Board, with large powers and large responsibilities, was found to attract to it men of more thought and men of more talent than those who would hold seats on half-a-dozen small Boards. A man who would not care to go into a City Council to be asked simply to consider about some little culvert or some small drain might be inclined to give his services to the public if some work were set before him that would exercise his thought and call out his talent; and in that way it would be found that one Board possessing these powers would be more attractive to the class of men they looked for to take up business of this kind than two small Boards. He need hardly say that in stating this principle he was only diluting and not doing justice to a principle which was laid down by John Stuart Mill in his book on "Representative Government." He called attention to this fact because it might probably give the argument some weight with certain

members of the House. The reason of it, however, was apparent even beyond that. For example, suppose another Board was set up, it would mean, to begin with, an expenditure of money for which there was absolutely no necessity. The City Council at present performed all the functions of a Harbour Board, and required no new officials for the purpose. On the other hand, a separate Board would require a secretary and an engineer, and probably some other officials. There would thus be, to start with, an annual expenditure of £1,000, which might be saved. He did not say that that was a great consideration for the House, because £1,000 was no doubt a small sum to most of its members; but it was nevertheless a consideration, and it was a consideration that they should not expend any money that was not absolutely required for the service of the public. Then, again, where there was only one Board there was an amount of prompt action that could not take place where there were two or three, because in the latter case one Board might wish a thing to be done and the other might not see its way to do it, and memoranda would pass between the two bodies, a great deal of time would be lost, and a waste of time and power would take place. That was the general principle on which he contended that there ought to be no attempt to set up a second Board of this kind in Wellington. And his colleague, as far as he could see, had not given any reason why a Harbour Board should be set up. The honorable gentleman said that the City Council had done all in their power to keep pace with the times as regarded wharf accommodation, but had lamentably failed; but beyond that general assertion he had not given the least proof that they had failed in any way to carry out the objects for which a Harbour Board would be established; and he (Mr. Hutchison) was at a loss how he was to bring on this subject, because the honorable gentleman had not mentioned a single thing that had gone wrong. The honorable gentleman said that interests had suffered. Now, he (Mr. Hutchison) would like to know what interests had suffered; what ship had ever come to grief within the harbour; what delay, beyond what might be expected under the circumstances, had ever arisen, with reference either to the discharge of cargo or the loading of cargo. He was not aware of anything of the kind. He had heard it mentioned, but his colleague had not stated it, that the City Council had charged too much at this wharf; but he held in his hand a comparative statement, which he was afraid he could not inflict upon the House, showing the wharf charges at the four chief ports of New Zealand, and an examination of this statement would prove to honorable members that the Port of Wellington was the cheapest port of the four. He was sorry to notice that the honorable member for Waikouaiti, who was very much interested in this question, having made up his mind that he was going to vote for the Harbour Board, had gone to sleep, and did not care to hear any of these particulars or figures; but he hoped that honorable members generally would think of this particular fact; that the Harbour of Wellington

Mr. Levin

was the most cheaply managed harbour in the colony, and that its charges were the lowest. That, he thought, was not an instance of the bad management of the harbour and wharf on the part of the City Council. He ought to say that this Bill was promoted entirely by the Chamber of Commerce. He said, "entirely promoted by the Chamber of Commerce;" and he wished to point out to the House what the Chamber of Commerce was. He was quite sure that the name "Chamber of Commerce" would convey to the minds of honorable members that it was a very large and important institution, carrying great weight with the community. Now, the Chamber of Commerce was certainly composed of the richest people in the City of Wellington. It was composed of the large merchants of Wellington—altogether of one hundred members. The number of people who had the management and care of it, and who took any interest in it, might be estimated at one-half that number, or even less. He should say that about thirty gentlemen composed the Chamber of Commerce, in so far as its business was concerned. He had nothing to say against these gentlemen at all, but he wished to put before the House this fact: that they were simply a voluntary association gathered together. Each gentleman represented himself and not a human being more. And here were thirty men who came to that House and said to his colleague, "We wish a Harbour Board to be established. Things have been mismanaged hitherto, and Wellington has fallen behind in the race with other ports." He (Mr. Hutchison) stood there to say that the affairs of the Wellington Harbour had not been mismanaged, that it had not fallen behind in the race, and that his colleague had not given one single instance of any kind to prove that such was the case, or that the City Council had not sought in every way to meet the views and convenience of those who had business at this port. Manifestly it was the interest of the City Council more than of the Chamber of Commerce to have this done. It was the interest of the thirty gentlemen representing the Chamber of Commerce to have things managed in their own particular way. The City Council had not always succeeded in giving them all they wanted, because, to tell the truth, they wanted things simply to suit themselves. But the City Council had to suit the whole of the public, and to suit those who came to the port from all quarters of the world, and consequently, as a City Council, they had not been able always to meet the views of those merchants who were exceedingly anxious to obtain things very cheap, and to have matters all their own way. Finding they could not succeed in getting matters all their own way, they now came and said they would set up a Harbour Board of their own. These thirty or forty, who called themselves the Chamber of Commerce—most respectable gentlemen—came and said they would do this, although in a report which he held in his hand they were candid and generous enough to make a remark to this effect: "As matters stand, probably the best solution of this question, as far as Wellington is concerned, might be found in giving to the Municipal Corpo-

ration the powers of a Harbour Board, together with suitable endowments."

Mr. LEVIN asked what was the date of the report.

Mr. HUTCHISON said it was dated the 20th of March, 1878. He was not in possession of a later report. Well, they came and said they wished to establish a Harbour Board and to borrow £100,000. Now, it would have been very desirable if his colleague had told them on what security they were going to borrow £100,000. If the Government had given his colleague to understand that they were prepared to make an endowment to this Harbour Board which they were not prepared to make to the City Council, he could understand it. Of course, he did not know what information the honorable gentleman might have on that point; he himself was not aware of anything of the kind. But the honorable gentleman said they were going to borrow £100,000; and they had not a hundred pence of security to give to any lender, and were not at all likely to obtain such a loan. He also said they were going to take away the wharf and the bonded store from the City Council; but on what principle they meant to do that it was impossible to determine. It would have been well if the honorable gentleman had told them on what principle he thought he was going to borrow £100,000, because it would be observed that there was no appearance of a fund of any sort in the Bill. There was a wharf now being built by the General Government, and it was just possible that it was intended to hand it over to the proposed Harbour Board. But his colleague knew as well as he did that that wharf by itself would simply be a white elephant. There would have to be a whole staff of officers for it, and it would not pay the expenses by itself; therefore it would not be a very valuable present. Of course, he understood they would get the pilotage and the light-dues within the boundaries of the harbour. The Customs collected these duties, and would hand them over to the Harbour Board if it were established, and it would pay for the maintenance of the lighthouse and for the pilot service. That was to say, the Customs would hand over to the Board probably £2,000, and it would very likely have to pay £2,500 for the services in question, which would not be a very profitable transaction. But he thought honorable members would see that he was entirely fighting in the dark, being in utter ignorance of what it was he had to reply to. The matter stood in this position: that the City Council were the owners of the wharf. They were not prepared to give up this wharf of theirs unless the House should, in its wisdom, in some future session say, "We shall take this from you." It was quite within the power of the House, of course, to take the property of the Corporation and say, "We shall give it to the Harbour Board." But there was something about this which would be rather awkward. They had borrowed a certain sum of money in order to extend this wharf, indicating, as the House would see, that they had not been careless of the interests of the port; and, in borrowing this money, they had not only pledged the wharf,

but they had pledged the whole property of the Corporation. They could not therefore give the wharf away in justice or in propriety, because it was part of what the creditor held as security for the money advanced. And, even supposing the Harbour Board stepped in and said, "We will be accountable for this part of the loan," the Corporation creditor would know nothing about that. He had his security under our Consolidated Loans Act, and, if the provisions of the Act were of any effect, the Corporation was not at liberty to part with the security. He did not anticipate, however, that the House would very readily take away the property of the Corporation—seeing that it was its own—and hand it over to another body. Then, he had no doubt the Harbour Board would cast a very longing eye on a certain portion of the foreshore, which the Corporation was about to reclaim. They had now a Bill before the House which asked for power to carry on the reclamation, and they hoped to get that Bill through as speedily as possible, because they looked forward to it as perhaps the most valuable of the few endowments they were likely to possess. He ought to point out, as honorable members were probably already aware, that Wellington had not been favoured as other cities had been. Its citizens had not even had a clock presented to them; they had persistently been left out in the cold. Auckland came down and got gifts; Christchurch had enormous funds and endowments—

Mr. HALL.—Oh!

Mr. HUTCHISON.—It was astonishing how poor people could make themselves when they wanted something more. Christchurch had enormous funds and endowments; and Dunedin was extravagantly rich. Wellington had been left systematically out in the cold; and he could assure the Government that they were going to get justice from this time forth. They were not going to give this Te Aro Reclamation to the Harbour Board. They meant to keep it as an endowment for the City of Wellington. They had the Crown grant to the foreshore, and they meant to reclaim the land and sell part of it, in order that they might year by year carry on the necessary improvements in the city. But it was a very remarkable fact, and one that he hoped the House would bear in mind when it came to consider the matter, that, whilst this Harbour Board would have no power to do any good, it would, under the general Harbours Act, have very considerable power to meddle and muddle. It could make by-laws, and under the powers conferred by these by-laws it could give the Corporation a great deal of trouble, even upon its own wharf. It would have power under these by-laws to regulate the times at which, and the places to which, vessels should be moved; it could regulate the storing and deposit of goods, make special regulations in the case of dangerous goods, make rules for the landing and embarking of passengers, and the taking-in and delivery of ballast. Now, although the Harbour Board would have these powers under the general Harbours Act, he did not see how it could possibly come on to the Corporation wharf, which was really private

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property, for it was not part of the Corporation property in any sense. It was bought by the Corporation, and was worked for the benefit of the citizens at large; and yet the revenue derived from it was not Corporation revenue in the strict sense of the term. He did not very well see how the Harbour Board could give orders to the servants of the Corporation employed on the wharf, over whom they ought certainly to have no control. Then, again, the Board could say that the land proposed to be reclaimed by the Corporation must be drained in a particular way, and that the streets must be laid off under their direction. All these things convinced him that it would be a very bad thing to have two bodies in existence, for the one must come into conflict with the other, and a very awkward and unpleasant state of things would be the result. He felt that he was labouring under a very great disadvantage in dealing with the whole question, because his colleague, who had as yet placed little or no information before them, would have an opportunity of replying coolly and calmly to the arguments he had adduced. He did not know whether the House was going to set up a Harbour Board or not; but, even if it were, he did not think it would set up a Harbour Board of this particular character. His colleague had properly remarked that this harbour was a colonial harbour; but the City Council had always endeavoured to look at it in that light. It had managed it from that standpoint. It had made by-laws, not for the benefit of any particular section of the country, but for the benefit of the colony as a whole; and, standing there as the representative of the City Council, he was quite prepared to say that everything had been done that possibly could be done to give effect to a large national view of the matter. He appealed to his colleague to say whether this was not so; and it was a poor compliment to the ratepayers who had invested their money in the purchase of this wharf, and had borrowed money to extend it, to say that they were not capable of managing it after they had successfully managed it for many years. It was proposed to supersede the City Council by a Harbour Board, two members of which were to be appointed by the Governor, which meant the Government. If the Government were going to give a large endowment to the Board there might be some propriety in that. Then, the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce for the time being was to be a member. Now, the Chamber of Commerce was a collection of a hundred gentlemen, each one of them representing himself. About thirty of them, who took an active interest in this matter, paid a considerable amount in wharf dues, and were exceedingly anxious to have these dues reduced to the lowest possible rate: in short, they were so sensitive upon this point that they eagerly seized upon the slightest flaw in the accounts rendered to them. There were two members of that Chamber in the House—the honorable member who introduced the Bill, and the honorable member for Manawatu—who could confirm this statement. If there was a chip in a barrel, or the smallest break in a box, they made

the City Council suffer. In fact, the Chamber of Commerce was exceedingly wise in its generation. Here were a number of gentlemen who took an active part in this matter, and they said that the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce—which was not an incorporated body, he would ask the House to notice, but was merely a number of fortuitous atoms gathered together to look after their own interests—should be a member of the Harbour Board. Here were a number of gentlemen holding a few meetings in the year—meetings which might never be held again, because they were not held under or in compliance with any law—and they asked that the chairman of these meetings should be nominated as a member of the Harbour Board, which was to have power to do all the things specified in the Harbours Act. If it were proposed to make the President of the Odd Fellows' Society a member of this Board it would have been far more sensible; and he said so advisedly, because the President of the Odd Fellows would be the representative of a much larger number of people, and he would be the representative of a body which had some sort of a legal incorporation. This Chamber of Commerce might never meet again. It simply met at its own convenience. But not only was the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce to have a seat at this Board, but another member was to be elected by the Chamber. They were to have two members; and he might mention that some two or three years ago, when an attempt was made to form a Harbour Board and the City Council acquiesced in the proposal, no such thing was proposed to the House of Representatives. They had no idea that such a thing would ever be thought of. In fact, the Chamber said—what he thought was a very sensible thing—that it was absurd that the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce should become a member of the Harbour Board simply in virtue of his chairmanship. He must find some other means of becoming a member. There were in the former Bill some grains of sense in comparison with the present one, inasmuch as provision was made in it for giving the Harbour Board an income and some work to do. It distinctly and definitely proposed the purchase of the wharf and of the Te Aro foreshore from the Council. The sum of money fixed for that purpose was stated in the Bill. There being now proposed to be two members of the Chamber of Commerce on the Board, the City Council—that was to say, the body representing the whole of the people of Wellington—were to elect one member. In other words, the Council, representing the whole of the people of Wellington, were to have only the same power of election to the Board as these thirty gentlemen, the members of the Chamber of Commerce. He asked whether that was a very feasible, commonsense, or just proposal. The City Council held the wharf for the people of Wellington, and yet they were to do only as much as the Chamber of Commerce in the matter. Two members were to be elected by the ratepayers of the City of Wellington, one by the County Council of the Hutt, and one by the County Council of Wairarapa East. If there was to be a Harbour Board at all, he did

not object to these latter appointments. It was recognizing to a certain extent a principle which he held very strongly—that these localities, having an interest in the Harbour of Wellington, should have representatives on the Harbour Board. But he would point out that, if they went beyond the City of Wellington for members of the Harbour Board, the Bill did not go far enough. The fact was that Napier was far more directly interested in the Harbour of Wellington than either Wairarapa East or the Hutt, for far more goods came from Napier to Wellington for shipment than from either of the above places. The honorable gentleman who was in charge of the Bill said the City Council of Wellington were not opposed to the Bill—that was to say, the City Council had expressed no opposition to it. He had no wish to conceal anything, and he was quite willing the House should have that fact before it; but it so happened that the majority of the City Council was composed of gentlemen who were also members of the Chamber of Commerce: in point of fact, the discussion of the Bill in the former body was but a repetition of the discussion in the Chamber of Commerce; therefore much weight should not be attached to that fact. The majority in the Council was 7 to 6 in favour of the Bill, and he thought it was a pity the Council had taken the view it did. Knowing the circumstances of the case, and knowing as he did very well the mind of the people of Wellington generally, whom he had to represent in the City Council and in that House, he had no hesitation in saying that the people of Wellington were distinctly opposed to the creation of this Harbour Board. He was very strongly convinced that attempts would be made to get property which belonged to the ratepayers of the city, and which they had already pledged with the rest of their property for money to perform necessary works—to work upon the Government and the members of this House to get that property taken away and handed over to the Board. That would not be done just now. The Board would go on drivelling and doing nothing for twelve months, and then it would come down to this House and say, “We have no money; we have no means of carrying on our duties; you must create endowments so as to enable us to improve the harbour.” Then the newly-created Board would get the foreshore and the wharf, and on that security they would borrow money to extend the wharf. How could they borrow money upon the wharf now? They must take over the debt upon it, and, in doing that, they would have done all that they possibly could do, as the wharf was pledged to the utmost as security for the money raised to improve it. That Board would, by any means in its power, try if possible to deprive the citizens of Wellington as a whole of the Te Aro reclamation, which the Council was about to carry out after the rising of the House. When the Board did that, it would be able to borrow money, for that was a most valuable property. But he hardly thought the House would do that which he knew was opposed to the wishes of the people of Wellington. He was very strongly opposed to the principle of this Bill, and, feeling that it

would be very injurious to the interests of a large portion of the people of the City of Wellington that this Board should be established, he must vote against the passing of the Bill. He might explain, in conclusion, that what he sought to arrive at was that, instead of a distinct Harbour Board being created in the House, further powers should be granted to the City Council—the powers of a Harbour Board having charge of the pilotage and all harbour matters, so that they might have the whole powers and responsibility of a Harbour Board, which at present they did not possess.

Colonel TRIMBLE looked at this question from a different point of view from either of the honorable members who had addressed the House, and perhaps a less partial one. They, no doubt, looked at it from a Wellington point of view; but he looked at it from a totally different point of view. As a stranger in the district, he could not help recognizing that Wellington Harbour must sooner or later become a very great emporium of commerce. That must strike any stranger at first view. But, if it was ever to become a great emporium, he believed it would be very much better to start afresh in regard to the management of it. He had one very notable instance in his mind, where a trust such as this came into the possession of a Corporation, and was on the whole well managed by that Corporation for nearly two hundred years; but it was managed in such a way that commerce was nipped for the benefit of the Corporation's pocket. The upshot was that, notwithstanding the admirable management of the trust from a commercial point of view, the people of the whole country rose as one man and demanded that there should be separation—not the people of the town, not the people of the district; but the people of the whole kingdom. He referred to the contest with regard to the Port of Liverpool some years ago. It was then considered a misfortune that the Corporation was the manager of the trust, that it was not the proper body to manage the trust, and that the management should be taken out of its hands and placed under the control of a separate Board. And the result had been exceedingly satisfactory. The fact was, a Corporation was chosen for purposes entirely different from the duties which a Harbour Board had to fulfil. A Corporation might be very well adapted indeed for attending to the drainage of the town or the paving of the streets, but in managing a port the great business was to look to the interests of commerce and commerce alone—to think of what would bring in most shipping and most goods to the port. In doing that, the Board was bound to give the largest possible accommodation for the smallest possible amount of money. That must necessarily be of enormous advantage to the town itself. But, supposing the Corporation has the management, it takes a portion of the funds derivable from the trust for its own municipal purposes. The indirect benefits derived from the proper management of the port were far greater than any direct benefit that might arise in this case to the people of Wellington at the present time. If the people of Wellington who were

opposed to this movement would take a hint from one who had no personal feeling in the matter, they would support the formation of this Board rather than oppose it. As to what had been said with regard to additional expense in the employment of an engineer, he might say that he doubted if there was any engineer in Wellington at the present time who would be competent to look after the port. The question of the composition of the Chamber of Commerce having been referred to, he might say that such bodies consisted of those who had been most successful in attending to the commercial affairs of the city. If that were so, and if the port was to be governed in the interest of commerce, he could imagine no more suitable body to be represented on that Board. He was rather surprised to hear that the Chamber of Commerce of Wellington consisted of one hundred members; but, whatever the number might be, it was certainly a body admirably suited to be represented on the Harbour Board. He noticed that the introducer of the Bill proposed to give only one member to be elected by those who paid dues to the amount of £10 a year and persons owning shipping to the extent of fifty tons. If the honorable gentleman would accept a suggestion from him, he would point out that one member was too little to represent these two classes, and would suggest that there should be one member to represent each of them. It was provided that if a person came under both classes he would have two votes. He would recommend the introducer of the Bill to change that in Committee, so that each would have a vote in his own class. There should be two members—one representing the payers of dues, and the other representing registered owners of shipping. This would make the number twelve, instead of eleven; but he did not think that was too large a body for the purposes of the trust. He hoped the Bill would pass with such amendments as might be found desirable, and he felt quite confident that, if the interests of the Port of Wellington were fully considered, some such Bill as this must be passed.

Mr. LEVIN, in replying, said it was a matter of great regret to him that his colleague was so directly opposed to himself with regard to this Bill, because he believed they both in their hearts had exactly the same motive—the interests of the people of Wellington. He contended that by bringing in this Bill he was doing what was calculated to promote the interests and advancement of the City of Wellington. The honorable gentleman had, quite unintentionally, he was sure, led the House to rather a false issue. He seemed to say that the desire of the promoters of this Bill was, as it were, to rob the citizens of certain properties they now possessed, and instanced the Queen's Wharf and warehouse and the Te Aro reclamation. Now, he (Mr. Levin) would say at once that, as regarded the wharf and bonded warehouse, it was quite a matter for the citizens themselves, through the voice of the Councillors, to decide as to whether they would part with these properties. The Bill simply took power to buy them if the Corporation were willing to sell: if they were not willing to sell, it was absolutely in their power to keep them. As regarded the Te

Mr. Hutchison

Aro reclamation, no member of the Chamber of Commerce who had discussed the Bill had for one single moment any idea of depriving the citizens of what was rightly and properly their heritage. The honorable gentleman had alluded to the Chamber of Commerce. Now, he was proud to acknowledge his connection with the Chamber of Commerce. Although it only numbered a hundred members, although at its meetings no greater number than thirty, forty, or fifty attended, still he maintained it was an institution the members of which were gentlemen who had a right to speak upon such a subject as this, who had a right to express their opinion as to what they conceived would conduce not only to the commercial interests of the port, but to the benefit of the general body of the inhabitants. This question was not a new one with the Chamber of Commerce. It was a matter which had engaged their attention for three or four years past, and on all occasions there had been a unanimously-expressed opinion that an independent Harbour Board was almost essential. He would go beyond that, and say that he believed that was the opinion of the inhabitants of the city; and he would tell the House why. In the late electoral contest he had met the citizens throughout the city, and he told them he was a supporter of a Harbour Board Bill, and that he would do his best to obtain the passage of such a Bill through the House, if elected. On no single occasion did he hear from the citizens then assembled expressions of disapproval of the course which he told them he intended to pursue. He would give the honorable gentleman credit for being perfectly earnest and sincere in the views he expressed—which were the views held by him ever since he had been in public life in the city—but he (Mr. Levin) maintained that his colleague did not represent the opinions of the City Council, who were practically the present administrators of the harbour. Before this Bill was brought before the last session of Parliament the Corporation were asked by the Chamber of Commerce whether they would introduce the Bill themselves. The result of that invitation was a conference between the two bodies; and a further result of that conference was the following resolution, passed, on the 29th May last, by a majority of eight to four in the City Council: "That, while the Council does not desire to oppose the formation of a Harbour Board, it does not deem it its duty to take the initiatory steps to secure the establishment of such a Board." The fact of this resolution, and the fact of his having met with no criticism at the hands of his constituents on his expressing an intention of supporting such a Bill, were sufficient evidence to the House that he did represent what he conceived to be the popular feeling in the city. There was no gentleman in the House who would be more loth than himself to step forward to do a wrong to those who had been so good as to send him to that House. He had come forward to confer what he conceived to be a benefit upon them. He was perfectly certain, situated as they were here, with no great extent of land in the immediate vicinity of the city which could

be cultivated, dependent to a very large degree on their harbour, which was their wealth, that any Act which would have the effect of making this place an emporium of trade, at any rate for the settlements in the neighbourhood, must benefit no particular class, but the whole community. As a matter of fact, they could see that the whole of this community was more or less dependent upon the shipping trade of the port. Then, the honorable member had been so good as to pass very severe strictures on the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce—and he said it without any hesitation—was not influenced by the personal motives the honorable gentleman led the House to suppose. He (Mr. Levin) had occupied the distinguished position of Chairman for two years, and he was bound to say that every matter brought before them was discussed in a most impartial manner, and the only desire shown in that Chamber was to further the interests of the City of Wellington. But the honorable gentleman himself, in 1876, when a Harbour Board Bill was framed by a committee from the Chamber of Commerce and the City Council together, did not at all object to the introduction of the Chamber of Commerce element into the Bill. He held in his hands the *New Zealand Times* of the 12th May, 1876, and—amongst other remarks made by the honorable gentleman, who, he might say, was then, as now, opposing the Bill—he said,—

"With reference to the constitution of the Harbour Board, he regarded it as very much a matter of indifference almost how it was constituted, provided the interests of the city were properly represented. The Chamber of Commerce did not seem to wish to be represented; but, for his own part, he thought it would be well for them to be represented there."

He would say, further, with reference to the constitution of the Harbour Board as set forth in this Bill, that its promoters had written to him to say they would be perfectly satisfied with any reasonable constitution the House might please to make in Committee. The only object was to get an independent Harbour Board for the port; they did not, in reality, care two straws who composed the Board. The honorable gentleman said that one single body with large powers and responsibilities was much more likely to induce good men to come forward, and that the duties intrusted to them would be much more satisfactorily performed, than if they had a number of small bodies. Now, he did not want to make charges against the City Council in connection with the management of the wharf. He must say that, with the means at their disposal, they had done as well as could be expected; but he did not mean to say that they had done as well as an independent body would have done, because they could not give the time that these matters required. He was not speaking without book, because on many occasions he found, from the public prints, that the meetings of the Corporation Wharf Committee had lapsed for want of a quorum over and over again. He contended that, when a number of gentlemen had an immense variety of matters to attend to, as in the case of

the Corporation, especially when the Corporation was combined with the Harbour Board, sufficient time could not possibly be given to the work. They could not give nearly so much time as would be bestowed by an independent Board formed of gentlemen who, at the outset, would make up their minds to give up a certain amount of their time to the duties devolving upon them. He was sure the honorable gentleman would give him credit for not bringing up a variety of small instances of want of attention on the part of the Corporation.

Mr. HUTCHISON. — I should like to hear them.

Mr. LEVIN would not trouble the House with them on this occasion, but he thought honorable members themselves would have quite sufficient evidence if they went down the wharf of this city—a wharf intended to meet the requirements of something like 24,000 people—and saw how incapable it was of meeting the strain cast upon it. He would take this instance: Over and over again during the past twelve months ships arriving from Home with valuable cargoes, worth £40,000 or £50,000, had to lie out in the stream waiting for a berth at the wharf for one, two, and he believed, in one instance, three weeks. It was most prejudicial to the interests of the port that £50,000 of money, irrespective of the value of the ship's time, should be lying out in the harbour for weeks, bearing interest, while the goods were kept from the consumers of the city. A Bill to constitute a Harbour Board was introduced into the House in 1876, and passed with scarcely any opposition at all. It was thrown out in the Upper House because it contained an objectionable clause, which was also contained in many other Bills of the same nature at that time, enabling the Board to borrow money. All Harbour Bills, quite irrespective of their value, were on that occasion thrown out in the Upper House. It was not on the merits of the Bill at all that that decision was arrived at. He had nothing to say upon the subject of wharf charges in this city. He conceded to the Corporation that they had always been most ready to meet any fair demands made upon them for the reduction of charges: he had nothing to complain of on that head. But the promoters of this Bill went on broader grounds than that. They did not want to quarrel with the wharf management as to whether certain goods paid a certain amount of wharfage or not. The object of the promoters of the Bill was eventually to make the port, as far as possible, a free port, by constituting a Board having nothing to do but to administer the harbour affairs, and having comparatively little to expend in anything else but in developing the harbour. For these reasons, he hoped the House would read the Bill a second time.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at forty-seven minutes past twelve o'clock a.m.

Mr. Levin

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 24th October, 1879.

First Reading—Second Reading—Native Expenditure—
Imprest Supply Bill (No. 2).

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Oamaru Waterworks Bill.

SECOND READING.

Liverpool, London, and Globe Insurance Company Bill.

NATIVE EXPENDITURE.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he was very sorry to trouble the Council with anything that was personal to himself. The explanation for his doing so was very simple, and he would endeavour to make it as brief as possible. When this Committee was appointed, honorable members would remember that he expressed his unwillingness to serve upon it unless it was intended to serve a real purpose of reform. His attention had been called for some time past to the grave abuses in the expenditure of the Native Department: but he was very unwilling to have anything to do with this investigation, and it was only at the request of the Hon. Mr. Miller that he consented to serve upon it. He had said then that the labours of the Committee ought not to be directed in any way by party, and that he would have nothing to do with an attempt to find out the faults or evils of any particular Minister or Administrators. On the occasion of the Committee's meeting—he would take care not to violate the rule which prevented honorable members quoting evidence taken before the Committee—what happened was this: He was endeavouring to lead the Committee to details which he thought it was essential that the Council should become acquainted with. Without making any accusation against any member of the Committee, or without bringing before the Council particular phrases, there undoubtedly was expressed in the Committee an opinion that, in taking that course, he was taking party action. Now, he did not think there was any man in the Council during this session who had stood more aloof from partisan action than himself: he should consider it very unworthy of himself if, as a member of any Committee, he allowed himself to do the work intrusted to him in a partisan spirit. And he did not choose to submit to the imputation of being actuated by party motives in tracing the sources, and indicating what he believed to be the ultimate reform, of what had fast grown up to be a very great scandal. The Native expenditure, ever since 1863, had been going on at the will of the Native Minister almost alone, and he did not hesitate to say, what he had said over and over again, that, in his opinion, during successive Governments, this expenditure had been carried on with great extravagance, and without regard to that control of Parliament which should be

strictly maintained. But of late years, and especially in the last year or two preceding the advent to power of the Grey Administration, efforts were being sedulously and successfully made to reduce the course of Native expenditure, and to direct it into a better channel than before. Now, when the late Government came into power the most positive promises were given that the Native expenditure should be reduced, and that they were entering for the first time upon a period of purity, retrenchment, and reform in that department. But the fact was exactly the contrary; for in the course of the last two years—not in the first year, because in the first year some considerable approach to reform was made, but in the last year—they found themselves launched into extravagances which he thought were not justifiable, but which, if ever so much justifiable, could only be so if they were laid before Parliament for approval beforehand. Last session he moved for a return of the excess of expenditure upon the Native votes. He must confess that he was very much disappointed to find that time after time that return was delayed; and, as a fact, the Council did not receive it until this session. He wished to guard himself entirely from saying that the late Native Minister deserved any particular blame: they had no business to attack particular Ministers for particular faults, or to gratify any objection they might have with respect to the conduct of any one Minister: they could only look at the Ministry as a whole. It was their duty, their right, and their obligation to the country, when they saw extravagance carried on in half a dozen departments, not to accuse particular Ministers, but to take the Government as a whole as being parliamentarily responsible; and it was in that sense he wished to speak. He would say that the expenditure of the Native Department had been extravagant and faulty; but, before an opinion of that sort could lead to anything like reform, some one must undertake the disagreeable duty of exhibiting the extravagance, and of indicating the groundwork of ultimate reform. The Committee had asked him to classify the expenditure, and to show it in a shape in which, he must say, the Government ought to have produced the return, in order to make it more intelligible to the Council. But he certainly would not undertake that work himself if he were to be subjected to the imputation of being actuated by party motives, and of doing mere party work. He would leave to others the labour and the disagreeableness and unpleasantness of it. This inquiry would be fruitless and valueless, unless they traced these evils to the core and were not ashamed to exhibit them: not in any unkind or unfriendly spirit to an individual, not with any idea of sacrificing any particular Minister, but in the exercise of their parliamentary right to hold every Ministry responsible which spent money beyond parliamentary authority, and launched the colony into liability the full extent of which it did not at present know. He would ask honorable members to allow him, for one moment, to give to the Council a few instances of what he meant. It had been the pride of former Governments, it was the pride of his honorable and

learned friend opposite, when he had a large influence in the Government of the country, to devote the fund set apart by the Constitution Act for the benefit and welfare of the Native people, a fund which was not brought under the annual review and control of Parliament, to the welfare and future benefit of the Native people; but they were now and for the first time treating this fund as a source to which they could refer doubtful expenditure, and as a means by which that expenditure could be so separated and divided as to render it difficult to trace it with any accuracy. In that Civil list there would be found a large amount of expenditure as cab hire: now, this was not an expenditure to which the Civil list ought to be applied: it was strictly a contingency, requiring to be voted by Parliament. It might be most necessary there should be a sum voted for that purpose; but, if voted, it ought to be voted specifically. In the same way, they found that there were gratuities, without any record of what they were, so far as the return informed them, but which were paid direct to the Native Minister, not stating what they were; and many other items of the same kind, such as saloon passages of Natives in steamers, and a gratuity to Joshua Jones, a gentleman whose gratuities were to be found in many places of the public appropriation. He gave these instances not with any sinister design, but to show that they were getting into a course of extravagance and disregard of self-restraint which it was absolutely necessary to put a stop to. Did the Council suppose that these items of expenditure would be easily found? Not a bit of it. When they called the accountants of the Native Department before them, they found, in a column called "Incidental," in the Native land purchases, a large, but unknown and un-stated amount, which was expended, and which they had not yet traced. He was not saying that this expenditure might not be justifiable, but the items had yet to be traced out, and the reasons for them ascertained, with a view to supplying a remedy for whatever abuses there might be. Again, if they looked at the return laid on the table of the Native-land-purchase expenditure, and read the Statement of the Native Minister, which he had gone to hear in another place the other evening, they would find that, while the amount expended in the purchase of Native land was £710,000, there was a only blank for the liabilities on account of negotiations which were in progress; and, when endeavouring to trace the liabilities, they had found it impossible to estimate them, except in an arbitrary manner, and the Committee had directed a return to be prepared upon estimate. Now, all this work required a great deal of attention, a great deal of labour, and, above all, no imputations on those members who had to do it; and it was because he had been met with imputations that he asked the Council to relieve him of his duties as a member of this Committee.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said he would second the motion *pro forma*; but he earnestly desired that it might not be carried, because he would not like to see the honorable member's name discharged from the Committee. He must

say he thought the honorable gentleman had brought in this motion without sufficient reason for doing so, and that he had quite misunderstood the intention of remarks made in the discussions of the Committee—discussions which had not been at all acrimonious and had not shown much diversity of opinion, because the Committee were unanimously agreed not only in substance, but in spirit. He believed the inquiry had not been prompted in a personal spirit, and that the Council had intended the Committee to have a political, not party, object—the good of the country. Recognizing that, he was quite willing to lend all the assistance in his power; but, after the general features of the plan of operations had been decided upon, he (Colonel Whitmore) had made the remark that the inquiry had practically come from another place, because it had been found impossible to get it on there. The honorable gentleman took that allusion to himself, for what reason he (Colonel Whitmore) could not explain, because he was not the member who had moved for the Committee, nor was he in the slightest degree identified personally with what had taken place in the matter. On the contrary, he had repudiated any partisan action whatever. However, the honorable gentleman had taken the allusion to himself, although he (Colonel Whitmore) at the time endeavoured to assure the honorable gentleman that he had no such intention. One gentleman who sat beside him on the occasion, however, had caught the tenor of his remarks and attached to them no other meaning than what he had stated. He was disappointed that the honorable member had not accepted his assurance, and that he had preferred to come to the Council to ask to be relieved of his duties. Some gentlemen were more sensitive than others, and it could scarcely be wondered that, as he was prepared to do so much work in connection with the matter, the honorable gentleman should be exceedingly sensitive, more especially as he had shown an aversion to party spirit: but if he had considered what was actually said he would have seen that no unfair accusation was brought against him; and he (Colonel Whitmore) would be sorry indeed if the Council indorsed his application. The honorable gentleman had taken advantage of this motion to travel out of the record considerably. He did not think it was usual or proper, on a motion of this sort, to enter into the general question; nor did he think it was necessary that the honorable gentleman, in his explanation concerning the motion, should have gone into such matters as he had gone into—for instance, such a matter as a comparison between the action of the late Government and that of its predecessor. He did not think that was altogether fair. But the honorable gentleman, by so doing, had placed him (Colonel Whitmore) under the responsibility of saying one or two words in defence of the Government of which he had been a member, in order to modify in some degree the impression which the honorable gentleman's remarks might otherwise create. The honorable gentleman said that the return he had asked for last session was not produced; and he complained of delay. Well, in answer to that, he had to say this: They all

Hon. Colonel Whitmore

knew that when the financial year ended there was a good deal of work in the departments, and that during the first month of the new year it was not easy to produce returns of that kind. There was no reason to make a point about the non-production of this return, because the honorable gentleman must know that other returns which were ordered during the same session were not produced during its continuance. The truth was, the session was too short to enable the order of the Council to be complied with; but the honorable gentleman seemed to have been desirous of producing the impression that the return had not been produced because of intention or remissness. He thought, however, he had refuted that. He did not suppose the honorable gentleman had any personal feeling in the matter, or that he desired to prejudice the late Government; but surely he must see that the way in which he had put the matter was unfair, since the honorable gentleman had gone on to read out items in which the late Native Minister's name occurred frequently, and about which there had been a good deal of fighting in another place. For instance, there was the allusion to Joshua Jones. Now, this Mr. Joshua Jones had been acting as agent for the Native Department for two or three years, and he got for his services under £200 a year in all. That appeared to be a moderate sum—other agents got larger sums—and an agent was particularly required at the spot, which was on the confines of what was called the King's district, and near the White Cliffs, which was delicate ground. Then the honorable gentleman had endeavoured to produce a somewhat injurious impression when he quoted such an item as £80 for the eradication of scab on the East Coast, without at the same time informing the Council that this was the tail-end of an expenditure voted by Parliament in former years, because honorable gentlemen would think such an expenditure was without precedent, and that the Government could have avoided carrying it out. Even if it had been a new expenditure, and in another part of the country, was it an expenditure that should be ill-regarded, under the circumstances? Another item which was referred to was that of the Waitara banquet. If the honorable gentleman had merely said these were items which ought to be inquired into, it would have been a fair thing; but he had spoken as if such items were not to be found in the records ever since this system of things was commenced in 1869. It was monstrously unfair to expect a new Native Minister to carry out a system which the whole colony had indorsed—had insisted upon being carried out—and to gain equal if not greater results, without having the same means at his disposal as his predecessors had had. It was known perfectly well that there were items analogous to those read over to be found in the records ever since 1869, and—although he (Colonel Whitmore) had always been opposed to that system, and although the late Native Minister had set his face against every expenditure he did not think defensible—he would point out that this great change could not take place at once. The honorable gentleman had admitted

that in the first year there was an improvement, and he had no doubt that much more would have been done had it not been for circumstances over which the Government had no control. Last year there was so much difficulty with the Natives, and such great questions had arisen, that necessarily there had been an increase in the expenditure; yet, if the accounts were looked into, it would be seen that the excess was quite unworthy of the extravagant language used in regard to it. Certainly the vote had not been exceeded by more than £10,000 altogether. He did not know how to justify this, because he did not believe in this way of paying the Natives for their services, giving them busts and tombstones, and so on; but he contended that it was part of the system which had been in vogue for years. Was there a gentleman who did not remember the extraordinary-looking object which used to stand in the smoking-room, and was now in the library, which was supposed to be a bust of the Queen, and had been presented to some of the allies of the colony? That was bought in the same way as the bust which had been alluded to, but the Natives would not accept it. This bust to which allusion had been made, and which he believed was the article referred to in a description of the New Zealand Court at the Sydney Exhibition, was that of Hapuka, a chief who in the early days had done a great deal for the colony, and to whom the colony had always thought it right to pay a considerable pension. He was a chief who had endangered his existence and that of his whole tribe through the assistance he gave in the acquirement of land in Hawke's Bay by the Government. He had fought for that for years, and was looked upon by the rest of the Natives in that part of the district as having sacrificed himself to the interests of the pakehas. If, then, the Government thought it right, on that man's death, to show the Maoris the esteem in which he was held, by the expenditure of this sum, was it an expenditure which should be looked upon with disfavour? Then the honorable gentleman objected to the incidental expenses connected with land purchases; and that brought him (Colonel Whitmore) to the Native land transactions. From the return which had been presented, it would be seen that the Government had acquired 2,278,535 acres for £347,207. And he must say that that return had modified his opinion in regard to this subject, because he had always thought that the colony had paid too much for what it got. The honorable gentleman said that the incidental expenditure should have been shown, and that especially the liabilities should have been stated. Now, as to the liabilities, it was impossible to state them, for this reason: that the Government purchased land by the acre, and, although a preliminary survey was taken, it was often of a very unreliable nature, mainly the result of guess-work, a survey not conducted by a surveyor; and when the land came to be passed through the Court and a scientific survey made the land turned out either very much less than, or greatly in excess of, the acreage before given. Therefore any liabilities framed upon such data must be of a haphazard charac-

ter. The incidental expenses would probably embrace many items which, looked at askance, would appear unjustifiable; but, with respect to every expenditure the country was put to in connection with land purchases, whether it were to bring down Natives to wrangle about reserves or about boundaries, or whether it were giving Natives a bonus for showing the country or inducing their people to sell the land, it must be remembered that the Government, in a matter of this sort, had to deal with the Natives as private persons would do who were desiring to purchase Native land, and could not object to pay reasonable expenses. A private individual would be very glad to pay those expenses, and give a large bonus to his agent as well. Then the honorable gentleman said he had been asked by the Committee to classify these accounts. That certainly was the truth, but the honorable gentleman had not done himself justice. It was a very laborious and a very unpleasant duty, and no member of the Committee would have ventured to ask the honorable gentleman to do that work, unless he had been good enough to offer to do it in the first place. Had the honorable gentleman not taken that step, it would never have entered into anybody's head to ask him to undertake the duty. He (Colonel Whitmore) certainly would not have ventured to do so, because he knew the performance of that duty meant the giving up of the whole of one's spare time for a week or two. Therefore the honorable gentleman scarcely did himself justice when he said he had been requested to undertake the duty. As to the gratuities which the late Native Minister had paid away out of this vote, and which were not accounted for, he (Colonel Whitmore) could only say that when these vouchers were brought before the Committee the explanations would accompany them; and, if they did not, the late Native Minister could easily be sent for, and no doubt would be quite willing to give the necessary explanations. But the honorable gentleman led the Council to believe that no explanation could be given, and seemed to create an impression that there was something to be concealed—something that was not quite straightforward; and, in defence of his late colleague, he wished to say that that was a wrong impression. The honorable gentleman said the expenditure had been faulty, extravagant, and wrong; but surely it would be time enough to use such language as that when the Committee had inquired into and reported upon the matter; and, until inquiry had been made, and it had been found that the expenditure was contrary to precedent, practice, and reason, the honorable gentleman had no right to prejudge the case. Even had he (Colonel Whitmore) believed that there had been improper expenditure on the part of political opponents, and been fighting a political battle with them, he should not have felt himself justified in bringing forward so sweeping a charge as that which the honorable member had brought forward, unless he had something to go upon. With the single exception that the Committee had ascertained that there were sums charged against the Civil list which ought to

appear in another account, they had, as yet, substantiated nothing. All that the Committee had done had been to agree upon the course which inquiries should take, and they had taken certain preliminary steps; but there was not yet sufficient evidence to enable any one to pass judgment upon the late Ministry for the faultiness, the extravagance, or the wrongness of their Native expenditure. He quite agreed with his honorable friend as to the principle; but he believed it would be found that the precedents were such that the system followed by the Government could not have been avoided at the time. He said that from the best information at his disposal, and he was not speaking without book. However, while he entirely accepted all responsibility for the action of his late colleagues, and fully admitted the principle that one Minister must stand or fall by the acts of his colleagues, still it was absolutely impossible that all the details of the expenditure in every department could be known to every Minister, or that he could be aware what had been the custom in times past; but he had been informed that the system of charging followed by the late Government was the system which had been followed in the past. There was only one other point to which he wished to allude, and that was, whether this was a Committee which the Council ought to have appointed at all. He did not think there was any precedent—

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE rose to a point of order. Was it competent for the honorable gentleman to go into that subject? If he wished to discuss that point, must he not give notice of motion?

The Hon. the SPEAKER said that, as the Council had deemed it right to appoint the Committee, the honorable gentleman could not on that occasion discuss the appointment or the constitution of the Committee.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE bowed to the ruling of the Speaker, but was bound to say that when the Committee was appointed he had no idea its scope was so wide as it now seemed to be. The honorable the mover had not informed the Council that it was intended to be an inquiry into the minor items of the department. He (Colonel Whitmore) had certainly regarded the purpose of the Committee as being confined to matters of principle, and he confessed he little thought the Committee was going to deal with matters which could more properly be taken into consideration by the Public Accounts Committee of another place. However, he should bring the matter up in another way.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the name of the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell be discharged from the Native Expenditure Committee."—(*Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell.*)

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said it appeared to him that the honorable gentlemen who had spoken on the subject, especially the honorable gentleman who had spoken last, had travelled somewhat out of the record, and if all were to follow his example they would bring on a general discussion on Native affairs and Native policy, to take part in which he was quite unprepared,

Hon. Colonel Whitmore

and no doubt other honorable gentlemen found themselves in the same predicament. The question, as he understood it, was this: Whether, for the reasons given by the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, that honorable gentleman should be discharged from the Committee. He (the Hon. Dr. Pollen) would be exceedingly sorry if the Council acceded to the motion, and it was to be hoped that, before the discussion closed, the honorable gentleman would be satisfied that it was the general desire of the Council that he should continue to hold the position to which he had been appointed by the Council. Before sitting down, he would propose to the Council an alternative by which the difficulty that existed might be obviated. When the Committee was appointed, it was within his personal knowledge that the honorable gentleman who took upon himself the duty—and he deserved credit for taking upon himself such an unpleasant duty—of bringing forward a motion for the appointment of this Committee, was most anxious that it should be deprived of anything like a party character in its constitution. The honorable gentleman spoke to him (the Hon. Dr. Pollen) on the subject, and was invited not to put him on the Committee, inasmuch as, rightly or wrongly, his doing so might subject the Committee to a suspicion, so far at least as one vote was concerned, of being a biased Committee; and his honorable friend was good enough to accept that suggestion, and leave his name out. Therefore he knew that the honorable gentleman had endeavoured so to constitute the Committee that, while the late Government was represented, the other members of the Committee should be fair and impartial. He believed that object had been attained, and for that reason he desired there should be no change in the present constitution of the Committee. On the Committee there was no other gentleman so qualified from his industry, his long experience of public affairs, and his special knowledge of the Native Department as the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell was to discharge the duties imposed upon him by the Council; and he regretted that that gentleman had to complain that he had met with obstruction in discharging the very duty which the Council desired to see discharged—the classification of Native expenditure, and an analytical illustration of the manner in which the public money had been applied to Native purposes within the last year. He was sure that no gentleman on the Committee had the same official knowledge, and the same ever-willingness to undertake public work requisite to enable him to perform the task satisfactorily, as that honorable gentleman. There was no doubt the Native expenditure within the last year had been abnormally excessive. The figures were there. They showed an excess of expenditure upon every one of the votes for Native purposes; and all the Council desired to know, as he was sure it would know, was, how it happened that this very large and enormous expenditure had been incurred, and what value the country had received for the money. That, he submitted, was a question which ought to have no party character at all. It was entirely a question of facts and of figures. And

therefore, if his honorable friend Sir F. Dillon Bell had found that he met in that Committee obstructions which prevented him carrying out the duties which were imposed upon him—obstructions which would prevent the Council receiving the special services in this case which he was so capable of rendering—the course to take would be, not to remove him or relieve him from the discharge of the duties to which he was appointed, but to remove the obstructions, as far as that was possible. Therefore he proposed to move, as an amendment, That the name of the Hon. Colonel Whitmore be discharged from that Committee. In doing this, he ventured to say to his honorable and gallant friend that, if the Council accepted this amendment, and the honorable and gallant gentleman would be good enough to indicate to him any honorable member of the Council whom he thought most fitted to take his place under the circumstances, he would himself have great pleasure in giving notice of motion that the name of that honorable gentleman should be added to the Committee on the next sitting-day.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said that, as a member of the Committee, he might perhaps be permitted to say a few words, and he should not trouble the Council with many. After the statement made in another place as to the finances of the Native Department, he thought the country was startled by hearing that the expenditure during the past fifteen months had been so greatly in excess of the votes; but it was still more startling to learn that arrangements had been entered into by the land-purchase section of the department, involving liabilities—extending, certainly, over more than one year—amounting to about one million. The statement of those facts no doubt sharpened the attention of the Council to the accounts, which were laid upon the table about the same time. It appeared from these accounts that there had been a great deal of extravagance in the Native Department, and that the expenditure had very largely exceeded the votes; and, with a view of ascertaining in what manner or direction the excess had been incurred, in the hope of checking such excess in the future, a Committee was appointed, on the motion of his honorable friend Mr. Miller, to inquire into the matter. In a debate in which a great number of members of the Council took part, they all, with a single exception, approved of the object of the Committee, and expressed a desire that this investigation should proceed. If the investigation was to be of any value, the Committee must state the facts: it must state the truth, no matter what the result might be to individuals. The Committee, going into this question simply in order to ascertain the truth and report to the Council, was bound to do so without regard to the feelings of individuals who might be found to have transgressed the law by sanctioning expenditure in excess of the votes. Now, the Committee found that these accounts were of so very peculiar a character that, unless some honorable member were appointed on it who had a special knowledge of the working of the department, the Committee would find itself very much at

sea. As had been said by previous speakers, the Committee possessed one honorable member who had that special knowledge, and a special aptitude for work in a greater degree, perhaps, than any other honorable member of the Council. The honorable and gallant Colonel opposite said that the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell had volunteered to analyze those accounts. The Committee considered that the first step they should take, in order to facilitate the future progress of the inquiry, was to classify all the votes and items of expenditure. He was not aware that, as had been stated by the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell volunteered to undertake this. It was not done when he (Mr. Menzies) was present, and the resolution which was agreed to, requesting the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell to do the work, was passed in his absence; but, if that honorable gentleman had volunteered to do it, it would have been only a further instance of the readiness to undertake any work for the public interest which had characterized his public life. Until the analysis of the accounts had been carried out, the Committee would be unable to see their way clearly as to what to report to the Council. The two members who had last spoken had borne their testimony, as he had done, to the special aptitude which the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell could bring to bear in working out the objects of this Committee, and it seemed to him that one of the most injudicious courses that could be adopted would be to allow an honorable gentleman who had this special aptitude to retire from the Committee. If the Council should, as he did not expect it would, agree to such a proposal, the Committee could not deal with the question with such aptitude as would otherwise be the case. He hoped his honorable friend (Dr. Pollen) would withdraw his amendment. He did not think there was any necessity for it. He had no doubt that his honorable and gallant friend (Colonel Whitmore) would discharge from his mind any idea that there might be some party dodge in the matter. He hoped and believed the inquiry would be conducted entirely in the interests of the public service, and he trusted his honorable and gallant friend would be convinced of this, and would co-operate, as he had no doubt he would be well able to do, in assisting the Committee to arrive at a conclusion. He hoped the Council would not only negative the proposition of the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell, but would do so in such a manner as would assure him that the Council had the most thorough confidence in his impartiality in the matter, and his special aptitude for the work undertaken by the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER thought the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell, the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, as well as the Hon. Mr. Menzies, had abundantly proved to the Council that they ought not to discharge the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell from this Committee. It was not necessary to inform them that the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell was one of the most valuable members of that Committee, for it was well known that there was no honorable gentleman so willing and so able to investigate difficult matters of this nature—matters which, he might say, presented themselves to some honorable members of

the Committee in altogether a new light—as the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell. He, for one, was quite free to confess that, until he sat on this Committee, he had no notion of the extraordinarily tangled web the finances of the Native Department were in. As had been already explained by the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell, the total amount under one heading of expenditure had to be followed through all kinds of different departments, and unless a man was an expert he would become fairly puzzled. The services of Sir Dillon Bell were absolutely necessary to the Committee, and he felt it would not be necessary to make any further appeal to the Council to refuse to pass the motion. He trusted the Hon. Dr. Pollen would ask leave to withdraw his amendment, for he thought that if the honorable gentleman were to press that amendment it would be in direct contradiction of the spirit which animated honorable members in the appointment of this Committee. If the Hon. Colonel Whitmore's name were withdrawn from the Committee, he thought it would be a very great pity, because, as had been stated by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, they were anxious that all parties should be represented on the Committee; and therefore he trusted the honorable gentleman would not press his amendment. He also hoped that the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell, seeing what was no doubt the feeling of the Council, would ask leave to withdraw his motion.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said he gathered, from the speeches which had been delivered by honorable members, that it was not the intention of the Council to pass the original motion, and he begged, therefore, to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The Hon. Captain FRASER would ask the Hon. Sir Dillon Bell to withdraw his motion, for this reason: that the honorable and gallant Colonel had not spoken with his usual amount of consideration, and the mover of the motion must be aware that the words used could not be applied to him. The Hon. Colonel Whitmore was not present when Sir Dillon Bell said he would withdraw his name from the Committee if it were simply appointed to find out matters against the late Ministry. The Hon. Colonel Whitmore could not possibly have been aware of this, or he would not have used the observations he had used.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL said he had no idea of introducing any personal matter, and had only asked the Council to relieve him from a position which was extremely disagreeable. If the Council wanted him to go on with this inquiry, he would only do so on the understanding that he was to carry it right through. He disclaimed any party feeling or desire whatever in this matter. All he desired was to bring about a reform in Native expenditure that would be satisfactory to the Council and to the country.

Leave to withdraw motion refused, and motion negatived.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 2).

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to nine o'clock p.m.

Hon. Mr. Miller

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 24th October, 1879.

First Readings—Auckland City West—Tapanui Railway—Normanby—Opunake Railway—Contempt of Court—Parihaka Natives—Nelson Lunatic Asylum—Grey Ministry—Maori Reserves Vesting Bill—Auckland Members—Supply—Imprest Supply Bill (No. 2)—Auckland Members.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Oreti Bridge and Ferry Reserves Bill, Harbours Bill.

AUCKLAND CITY WEST.

Mr. GISBORNE brought up the report of the Committee on the petition of J. Newman against the return of Messrs. Wallis and Hurst for Auckland City West.

The report was read as follows:—

"The Committee, to whom was referred the question whether the forms of this House and the requirements of the Election Petitions Acts have been complied with by the petitioner in the petition of Joseph Newman against the return of Dr. Wallis and Mr. Hurst as members of the House, have the honor to report as follows:—

"The Committee are unanimously of opinion that the forms of the House and the requirements of the Election Petitions Acts have not been complied with by the petitioner in this case.

"The word 'bribery,' as one of the alleged charges, has been interlined in the petition, and the interlineation is a breach of Standing Order 263, because it is not, as required by the Order, signed or initialed at each end of such interlineation, and because such interlineation is not, as also required by the Order, 'indorsed and duly signed and attested on the back of every such petition by the petitioner or petitioners.'

"The petition is against two members jointly named therein. The Committee are unanimously of opinion that the Election Petitions Acts do not sanction, and make no provision for, the presentation of a single petition against the return of more than one member.

"W. GISBORNE, Chairman.

"24th October, 1879."

Mr. PITT moved, That the report be taken into consideration by the House on Wednesday next.

Mr. HISLOP thought the report of the Committee should be taken as a final one. The Committee had been chosen by the Committee of Selection, and was very fairly constituted. He believed he would be following the practice usual on such occasions as the present, when the requirements of the law had not been complied with, by moving, as an amendment, That the petition be ordered to be withdrawn.

Amendment agreed to.

TAPANUI RAILWAY.

Mr. IRELAND asked the Minister for Public Works, If the Tapanui line of railway is likely to

be completed within contract time; and if the contractors are at present pushing on the work at a reasonable rate? He asked the question because he had received letters from some of his constituents stating that the works were almost, if not entirely, suspended.

Mr. OLIVER said the terms upon which the contract was entered into were somewhat peculiar. It would be remembered that the payments were to be made after the works were constructed. The works were carried on vigorously up to a date about three months back, since which time they had very much slackened, and were now virtually at a standstill. Unless great efforts were made the contract could not be completed in the time specified.

Mr. IRELAND hoped the Government would endeavour to push the work on, so that the contract might be completed within the specified time.

NORMANBY-OPUNAKE RAILWAY.

Mr. KELLY asked the Premier, Whether the Government will place a sum on the estimates for the construction of a light line of railway from or near Normanby to Opunake, through the Waimate Plains, with the view of settling the Native difficulty on the West Coast on a permanent basis, by the location of a resident population thereon? He believed the proper policy in dealing with the Native difficulty on the West Coast was to open up the land by roads and railways, in order to facilitate the settlement of people upon it. He would like the present Government to state what their intentions were in regard to the matter, because a work of this kind would settle population on the land, and in that way assist greatly in the solution of the Native difficulty.

Mr. HALL said the honorable gentleman could hardly expect the Government to give a definite answer to his question at the present time. The whole question of the settlement of the West Coast was one which the Government proposed to consider very carefully without delay, and he would take an opportunity to state the views of the Government as early as possible.

CONTEMPT OF COURT.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked the Government, Whether they will be prepared to introduce a measure to define with some precision what "contempt of Court" means; how far its judicial interpretation shall be permitted to interfere with freedom of public discussion; whether it shall or shall not be considered a penal offence; and, if a penal offence, whether it shall be competent for a Judge to inflict punishment in regard thereof summarily, or only under the usual legal safeguards which protect the liberty of the subject? Perhaps he might be permitted to read a newspaper paragraph, the appearance of which had induced him to put the question on the Paper. In the *New Zealand Times* of the 23rd October the following paragraph appeared:—

"When the case of *Richardson v. the Bank of New South Wales* was called on yesterday, at the Supreme Court, Mr. Travers, one of the counsel

for the defence, addressed his Honor with reference to a paragraph which had appeared in our morning contemporary commenting on the case. The learned gentleman read the paragraph in question, and contended that it was calculated to prejudice the minds of jurymen. He thought the publication of such paragraphs amounted to contempt of Court. His Honor said the paragraph did not seem to express any feeling, but that was not necessary to bring it within the censure of the Court. Mr. Travers pointed out that it was a statement of facts from one point of view only. His Honor thereupon said it was highly improper to publish anything (even a declaration) previous to its coming before the Court. It was certainly improper to publish a one-sided account. The subject then dropped. Later on, however, Mr. Brandon drew his Honor's attention to another paragraph, which appeared in an evening paper, just published, which contained a statement concerning the case that was entirely false—namely, that a week ago the bank offered to settle the action by making Mr. Richardson a present of the £1,550 he had already drawn under the letter of credit, and paying his legal costs, but that plaintiff had declined to accept the offer. His Honor said that, after the remarks he had made in the morning, he was perfectly astonished that such comments should be made; and, if a motion at the proper time and place were made to bring the offending newspapers before him, he would deal with the matter, and would teach them that his remarks were not to be treated with contempt."

He supposed the newspapers would not mind that; but the whole tenor of the paragraph seemed to point to a state of things which required some legislation in order to define what contempt of Court meant.

Mr. HALL replied that the Government proposed to consider the whole subject during the recess.

PARIHAKA NATIVES.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether it is their intention to ascertain the nature of the epidemic raging amongst the Natives at Parihaka; and, if found contagious, will they take the necessary precautions to prevent it spreading? He saw by the newspapers that an epidemic was raging at Parihaka, and it was the duty of the Government to make inquiries into the matter, because, if the epidemic were found to be of a contagious nature, they should take steps to prevent its spread.

Mr. BRYCE said the Government had in its possession a good deal of information on this subject, and he did not think further inquiry would add to that information. The epidemic which prevailed at Parihaka was a kind of low fever, of a character pretty well known on that coast. During the war he had some experience of it himself, and it was then called camp fever. It was not contagious; but, even if it were, he was totally at a loss to conceive what steps the Government could take to prevent it spreading. If the honorable gentleman would suggest what the Government should do in case a contagious fever broke out, he would be obliged to him.

NELSON LUNATIC ASYLUM.

Mr. ACTON ADAMS asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether the Government contemplate reinstating Thomas Butler, the former keeper of the Nelson Lunatic Asylum, in office?

Mr. HALL said that, before announcing the decision of the Government with regard to the matter, he would recall the facts of the case, which were as follow: In September, 1876, Butler brought charges of immorality against the surgeon and matron of the asylum, which were heard by the Deputy Superintendent (Mr. Curtis being in Wellington) and full Executive, and Butler was dismissed, though with six months' salary. He appealed to Mr. Curtis, who refused to interfere, after having gone carefully through the whole case. Abolition occurring immediately afterwards, Butler appealed to the General Government, who declined to revise the decision of the Provincial Executive. In 1877, he petitioned the House of Representatives, and the Public Petitions Committee recommended further inquiry. A Royal Commission was issued to Dr. Skae and District-Judge Broad, who, after hearing Butler by counsel, pronounced the charge a wilful and malicious falsehood. In 1878, Butler again petitioned the House, but this time the Public Petitions Committee refused to entertain the question. Then he petitioned the Secretary of State, who refused to interfere. Previously to this he had petitioned His Excellency the Marquis of Normanby, and had written several letters to the Colonial Secretary, who at length refused to answer them. In August last, he petitioned His Excellency Sir Hercules Robinson, enclosing another petition to the House. Those were the facts of the case; and the answer of the Government was, that they did not intend to reinstate Butler.

GREY MINISTRY.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable member for the Thames asked me yesterday whether I would request the Governor to lay on the table of the House the correspondence that had passed between His Excellency and the late Ministry with reference to their resignation. In compliance with the honorable gentleman's wish, I have communicated with His Excellency, who has authorized me to say that, although the correspondence is of such a nature that he would not himself have volunteered to present it to the House, he felt that he would not be justified in refusing its production if the honorable gentleman desired that it should be laid on the table; but, as the memoranda contained a version of a conversation that had taken place between His Excellency and the honorable member for the Thames, in the accuracy of which His Excellency was unable to agree, he thought it right at the time to indorse on the memoranda his own version of this conversation: and, if the memoranda were produced, the indorsement referred to would have to be produced with them. Under these circumstances, if it is the wish of the honorable gentleman that the correspondence should be produced, it will be laid on the table.

Sir G. GREY.—I think it had better be laid on the table. I think it is also desirable that I

should have an opportunity of seeing the indorsement.

Mr. HALL.—I will lay the correspondence on the table on Tuesday, and the honorable gentleman will see the indorsement then.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I wish to state my opinion that an indorsement of the kind referred to by the Premier is a continuation of the correspondence. I think, if the Governor questioned the accuracy of statements made by his Advisers, he should have stated so at the time, and therefore it would be only just that I should be allowed to see that indorsement, and that an opportunity should be afforded me of placing my indorsement upon it before the papers are laid on the table of the House. I am sure that is what all constitutional practice would show ought to be done. I put it to the Government, therefore, that they should make my representations to the Governor, and that further consideration should be given to the subject.

Mr. HALL.—Of course, I shall be very glad to represent the honorable gentleman's wish to His Excellency; but I cannot see that the honorable gentleman has any absolute claim to have, as it were, the last word. The Governor did not reply at length to the honorable gentleman's memorandum, because, as he informs me, he did not think that it would serve any useful purpose to continue the correspondence. The indorsement is merely a statement of His Excellency's recollection of the conversation. I should have thought the proper course would be to lay the correspondence as it is on the table, and if then the honorable gentleman differs from His Excellency's version of the conversation he can state to the House wherein he differs. However, it is not for me to decide—it is for His Excellency to do so; and I will represent the honorable gentleman's wish to His Excellency, and take his pleasure upon it.

Sir G. GREY.—In explanation, I wish to say that I still remain of opinion that, if there is a dispute as to the accuracy of my version of the conversation, I have a right to see the indorsement before the papers are laid on the table. I have no wish to have the last word. Let the Governor continue the correspondence, if he desires. I can only say I know of no grounds upon which he can dispute the accuracy of my statement as to the conversation that took place. I am sure the honorable gentleman will see his way to advise His Excellency that I am right.

MAORI RESERVES VESTING BILL.

Sir G. GREY, in moving for leave to introduce this Bill, thought it necessary to make a few remarks in consequence of what fell from the Native Minister a few evenings previously. He begged to observe that the object of himself and his colleagues during the time they were in office had been, as far as possible, to reduce the business of the Native Department, and by degrees to abolish that office altogether. In pursuit of that object, the first step they took was to place the Native schools under the Education Department; thereby assimilating as far as possible Native and European education in the country, and doing away entirely with the branch of the Native

Department which had that subject under its charge. Secondly, a Bill similar to the present was prepared, and leave obtained to introduce it last session, placing all Native reserves in the hands of the Public Trustee, and thus taking that duty also from the Native Department. Another result of that measure would be of very great importance—an importance which the House could hardly estimate—namely, that individuals anxious to obtain possession of Native reserves would not have to apply to the Government, and it would not be the interference of Ministers that would enable them to get possession of those reserves. The Native reserves would be dealt with exactly as the reserves for orphans and other persons whose property was in the hands of the Public Trustee. Then, supposing he was successful in carrying this Bill, there was another measure on the Order Paper which would entirely do away with the Native Land Purchase Department. The result of that measure, if carried, would be that the Native lands in future would be sold in the public market in small blocks under the direction of the Government, and if purchases were made by the Government they would be made under the old pre-emptive-right regulations, and the land obtained in competition with private purchasers. By that measure that branch of the Native Department would be abolished. Thus, three of the great branches of the business of the Native Department would be got rid of, and placed upon the shoulders of the proper departments of the Government that regulated the same matters for Europeans. He hoped, therefore, the House would give him leave to introduce this Bill, which would be of the greatest benefit to the whole community.

Bill introduced, and read a first time.

AUCKLAND MEMBERS.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, I move, That the notices for leave to introduce Bills be postponed. I stated yesterday that the Government would to-day afford the honorable member for Port Chalmers an opportunity of bringing forward the motion which for some time past he has been anxious to propose. When we said at the beginning of the week that we were anxious for a vote of Supply, the honorable gentleman intimated that he and his friends would not refuse Supply, but would probably move some amendment when we moved to go into Committee. To afford him an opportunity of bringing forward his amendment and having the matter settled as speedily as possible, and also to avoid any delay in the necessary issues for the public service, we have placed Supply at the head of the Order Paper to-day. We propose now at once to move Supply, and we invite the honorable gentleman to bring forward his motion. The honorable gentleman has several times stated that it is very desirable this matter should be dealt with at once and disposed of. We regret extremely the delay that has taken place, and we very cordially and heartily reciprocate the desire expressed by the honorable gentleman for an early settlement of this question. We therefore say now, what

he said the other evening, that we are prepared to go into the matter at once, and come to a division without delay. The Treasurer will now move that the House go into Committee of Supply; and I hope the honorable member for Port Chalmers will respond to our desire, and at once move his amendment.

Mr. MOSS.—I would put it to you, Sir, whether it would not be well for the Premier to afford to us, who have been sitting here for the last fortnight waiting for this motion to come on, some explanation of the causes which have led to this sudden change in his ideas. It might have some effect upon us.

Question put, That the notices for leave to introduce Bills be postponed until next sitting-day.

Mr. MOSS.—I have nothing further to say, beyond suggesting that the Premier might kindly inform us, who are in darkness on this side of the House, as to the causes which have led to this great change, on which I heartily congratulate the Government, and on the earnest desire shown at the present time to facilitate the business of the country. Hitherto the Government have been obstructing the business of the country in a most marked manner, to our great regret on this side of the House. I think the honorable member might let us know the cause of this change, as it might influence us in the same way as it has influenced the Government.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Apparently the delay has not been altogether fruitless. Unfortunately the forms of the House prevent me from bringing on my motion, and we have no wish to bar supply. I thought the Government would place us in a position to come to a direct issue, and go into the question at once. I hope the Government will adopt my suggestion, to place my motion on the top of the Order Paper next sitting-day, or at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I understand the honorable member for Port Chalmers has stated that he has no wish or intention to refuse or intercept supply, but that he wishes to have a distinct reply from the Premier whether he will allow the no-confidence motion to come on immediately afterwards. That is a matter with regard to which we, on this side of the House, would like to have a statement from the honorable member at the head of the Government. It seems to me that the proper course would be, after supplies are granted—which I understand this House is very willing to agree to—that this motion of no-confidence should come on immediately, and that we should take the division at the earliest possible moment—perhaps to-day. What I wish, and what I think honorable members generally wish, is, that the Premier should state whether he will bring on the motion of no-confidence immediately after supply.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, the honorable member for Port Chalmers has, I am bound to say, disappointed me. We have had from the honorable gentleman repeated declarations of the sound constitutional maxim that, on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, representatives had a right to state their grievances. We had a

distinct intimation from the honorable member for Port Chalmers that he intended to bring forward a grievance whenever the motion for going into Committee of Supply was proposed; and that is the only thing which has prevented supply being granted before now, and has prevented certain payments out of the public chest. Therefore, I repeat that I am disappointed, when we tell the honorable gentleman, "Now we give you the opportunity you have repeatedly expressed your wish to have, to bring forward your grievance," to find that he declines to avail himself of that opportunity. However, we are really anxious to get on with the business of the country. We do not stand upon forms and ceremonies; we do not stand upon trifles in our desire to meet the honorable member for Port Chalmers. Therefore, if the honorable gentleman declines this opportunity of entering upon this debate, we will receive him in the form which he desires at the earliest possible moment. As soon as supplies are granted for the public service, we will move the postponement of all other business in order to take the motion of want of confidence.

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I move, That you do now leave the chair for the purpose of going into Committee of Supply.

Mr. MOSS.—Before we go into Committee of Supply I would like to make one or two remarks with reference to the Financial Statement laid before us by the Treasurer. On looking into the figures, I have been so struck with the disparity between his calculations and those I have been able to make that I thought it would be desirable to bring the matter forward in order to have it cleared up. I speak under correction, because, of course, I have not access to official documents. The difference between the Treasurer and myself is something like £600,000. I think that, if the deficit, or deficiency—I do not know the exact official word—were taken at £311,000, it would be much nearer the mark than £911,000. I have not had sufficient time to go through the figures as carefully as I would like; but there is one apparent mistake of £354,000, which I would like the Treasurer to explain. If honorable members will turn to the tables referred to in the Statement, they will find that among the estimated and actual expenditure of the Consolidated Fund for the financial year 1878-79, including liabilities payable in respect of the year, the sum of £354,913 is placed at the bottom of the column headed "Actual Expenditure," and it makes a total expenditure for that year, including many large exceptional payments, of £4,006,000. That includes the liabilities that were outstanding at the end of the financial year 1878-79. Now, if honorable members will turn to page 12, which shows "the estimated revenue (from present sources and expenditure) for the financial year 1879-80," they will find the expenditure, as estimated by the late Government, put down at £4,091,034, less £140,000 proposed to be defrayed from loan. It seems to me that the sum of £354,000 is again included

Mr. Hall

in that estimate. The late Government, when they estimated what the expenditure would be for the year 1879, would naturally include the liabilities from the previous year. So that we should be actually charging thirteen months' expenditure against twelve months' revenue, and we may fairly reduce the so-called deficiency by that sum of £354,000. There is another sum of £248,000 which the Colonial Treasurer has struck off the estimated revenue of the preceding Government. I do not know why that sum should be struck off. I do not know upon what grounds we should expect so large a falling-off in the revenue. It is true that the land revenue has fallen off; but it is also true that every other source of revenue has kept up wonderfully well. All other revenue was, last year, in excess of the estimate, and it will probably be so this year. However, the Colonial Treasurer has thought fit to strike off very material amounts from the estimate of revenue for 1879-80, amounting altogether to £248,000. The receipts from railways, which the late Government estimated at £950,000, the honorable gentleman has reduced to £900,000. He has also reduced the Customs receipts by £50,000, and other revenue in the same way, making altogether this net reduction of £248,000. The land sales have been reduced to the extraordinarily small sum of £248,000. I do not think the land sales have ever been so low; and I remember reading a table appended to the Financial Statement of two years ago, which showed distinctly that the average land revenue for the previous ten years had not been less than £500,000. I do not know why the honorable gentleman now puts it down at £248,000 only. It seems to me a very arbitrary way of dealing with the revenue of the colony, and at this particular crisis, when we are endeavouring to negotiate a loan, a very dangerous and mischievous way of dealing with it. Why the honorable gentleman should have taken this particular occasion to say that we anticipate the revenue for the next year will be so much short of what we have always been obtaining, I do not know. I will not trouble the House by going into various other matters which might be fairly debated on the Financial Statement. I think what I have stated is sufficient to show that, as matters appear in the tables, there is a possible mistake of £354,913 in the first instance, in having included that sum twice over; and I say also that the Treasurer is not warranted in reducing the estimate of revenue by £248,000. Up to the end of the year 1878-79—the year just past—there was no deficiency—according to the figures the honorable member himself has brought down—worthy of consideration. Considering the enormous falling-off in the land revenue during that year, it reflects great credit upon the late Government that they should have been able to hand over the finances in the position in which they did. I say this advisedly, after carefully considering the matter. I say, further, that, if there is to be any deficiency, any trouble at all, it is due entirely to those honorable gentlemen who now fill the Government benches, who have saddled the colony with a system of

subsidies or bribes to make the Abolition Act palatable. It is to that our troubles will be due. I do not wish to underrate the difficulty. Clearly, if we go on borrowing and adding to our liabilities, the difficulties will increase; but there is nothing in the present position of the colony at which we need be seriously alarmed. I think the honorable gentleman, on reconsideration, will find the absolute deficiency in the revenue of the colony at the end of the financial year will be nearer £311,000 than £911,000. The statement of the honorable gentleman as to the amount of deficiency is one which I am sure will do us incalculable harm, and it is more to be regretted if it cannot be proved to be indisputably true. If there is the slightest ground for believing that it is an exaggerated statement, then I say a great wrong has been done to the country and to its credit, which has now become one of its most cherished possessions. Moreover, the Treasurer has cut down the estimate of the Land Fund below what might be reasonably expected to be the amount this year. I would conclude by asking the honorable member if he will, in reply, explain to us whether this sum of £354,000 is dealt with in the one table, and then included in the following table; also, if he will explain to us upon what ground he declares that the revenue of the present year will fall so much below the revenue of the past, and below the calculations of his predecessors. I would also like him to explain on what ground he has estimated that the land revenue will fall below the estimate of previous years. I hope this information will be given to the House.

Mr. PYKE.—I do not intend to detain the House long with my remarks, but I think this would be a convenient opportunity to set right a matter which has been set wrong. It has been put before the world that the Opposition refused supplies. There is no more patent fact to this Parliament than that the Opposition never did refuse supplies: on the contrary, the Opposition were always willing to grant supplies at any moment. I am not content to bear the odium of having been a participator, directly or indirectly, in such a proceeding. What was the fact? The fact was this: that Ministers came down to this House and asked the Parliament, in the most audacious manner, to forego the constitutional right of stating their grievances when supplies were asked for by the Crown. They absolutely asked that one single member, the honorable member for Port Chalmers, should speak for the other members on the same side, each of whom had an equal right to speak and act for himself—and to promise that every member on this side of the House should forego that constitutional right, which was won for us by our fathers with the expenditure of much blood and treasure, and which right I trust their children will forever cherish. It was an unconstitutional request to make, and one which I venture to say, had it been made by a Minister of the Crown in the House of Commons, would have brought any Ministry into public disrepute. Having put that matter right, I wish to ask honorable gentlemen one question, which they can answer or

not, as they please. It is only due to themselves to inform them that the atmosphere—I may say the impure atmosphere—of the lobbies has been pervaded lately with very ugly rumours. It has been rumoured that the members of a certain section of this House have sold their votes to the Government for a sum of money—a sum of money to be devoted to public works in their district. I do not mean that the money was handed over from the Treasury, because the money is not yet there; but that a sum of money has been promised. It is derogatory to the character of this House that these rumours should pass without contradiction; and it is derogatory to the character of honorable gentlemen on those benches that they should be supposed to be guilty of corrupt practices such as we have not heard of since the days of Walpole. In the mildest possible form in which I can put the question, I ask them, is there any foundation for these rumours?

Mr. TURNBULL.—My ignorance of parliamentary usage may be my excuse, but I think the House has been put in an unfortunate position by the statement just made by the honorable member for Dunstan. It has been stated that offers have been made by the Government, and that demands in writing have been made on the Government, in favour of one particular portion of this colony. I am inclined to consider these statements as incorrect, if we may judge from the observations made by those members when they stated their allegiance to the Opposition, and their determination to abide by that allegiance. I cannot believe the rumours that those honorable gentlemen have accepted a bribe for their district as the price of their vote in this House: I hardly go so far as that. Until we have full information before the House we have no right to accept such statements. I would rather see the matter fought out now upon the question of supplies. We have been told by the Colonial Treasurer that there is a great deficiency in the revenue. That is a statement which ought to be considered. No matter to what side of the House I belong, I would not submit to see an injustice done to one portion of the colony for the special benefit of another part of it. Whatever arrangement has been made, we should know it; and, if it is a fair arrangement, let it be carried out. If there is an unfair attempt to pay money to one Island at the expense of the other, the Government will soon find out that they have made a great mistake. I hope the Government will afford the House information as to the bargain alleged to have been entered into.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I would like to ask the honorable gentleman a question with regard to the liabilities referred to in the Financial Statement. It has been usual to deduct the revenue assets from the liabilities before the net amount of liabilities is stated. I would ask the honorable gentleman if he has done so.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I believe the question before the House is, That you do now leave the chair. I move, as an amendment to that motion, That any correspondence that has passed between the Government and any Auckland members, regarding the terms on which they would

vote with the Government, be laid before this House; or, if any terms or arrangements for the same purpose have been concluded with any Auckland members, that the same be communicated to this House. I wish to impress upon the House that a very grave question is now before it; a very grave emergency has arisen; a very grave precedent is about to be established. I am informed, on an authority I cannot doubt, that four Auckland members have agreed to vote with the Government, have this day concluded such an agreement, and that that agreement has been concluded in consequence of some arrangement made between themselves and the Government. Now, as some of those gentlemen made a pledge, as I understand, to their party not to form any coalition until the no-confidence motion was disposed of, I think the matter is of the utmost importance, and one in which the public are deeply interested, and that the exact terms of the negotiation should be communicated to the House. I am sure every one will agree that this is a thing which nearly concerns, I may say, the character of the House before the whole country. I have no doubt whatever that a satisfactory explanation will be given; but I think it is due to all parties that that explanation should be afforded to the House, and that we may all know exactly the ground on which we stand, and what is the proper course for us to pursue under these unexpected circumstances which have arisen; and that the whole country at large may understand the very grave question which has arisen in this House, and the precise standpoint at which we all are at the present moment. I trust, therefore, that the Government will at once assent to the motion I have made.

Mr. HALL.—First of all, Sir, I would ask you whether the amendment of the honorable gentleman is in order.—(Oh, oh.)—It has become customary with some honorable members in this House to meet argument by rude noises. These are not argument. It rather shows a deficiency of argument when honorable gentlemen can do nothing but utter rude exclamations. It does not add to the dignity of the House, and therefore I think it is a custom to be regretted. I ask, as I have a right to ask, whether the amendment—which, I understand, calls not for official correspondence, but any correspondence whatever which may have passed between the Government and certain Auckland members—is in order. I have had correspondence with many members opposite—Auckland members and members on all sides of the House—

Mr. GISBORNE.—I do not think that is meant. Read the wording of the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think the amendment is out of order.

Mr. HALL.—Will it be in order for me to add, "and that a statement of all private conversations between the honorable member for the Thames, the honorable member for Port Chalmers, and any Auckland or Otago members, be also communicated to the House, including any private conversations referring to the terms on which their votes shall be given in this House"? That is a fair sequel, I think, to the amendment of the

Sir G. Grey

honorable gentleman. If that is agreed to, and it is honestly carried out, I have no objection to the amendment; but, if that cannot be done, it will be for the House to say whether this proposal is not puerile. I confidently hope the Government will have the support of certain Auckland members; and the honorable gentleman will see, when the policy of the Government is developed, whether it involves anything unreasonable, anything unfair to the colony at large, anything unjustifiable, anything derogatory to our character as members of this House. That is all the answer I shall give to the honorable gentleman.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I may say, as a young member of this House, that I have been given to understand that a bargain has been entered into—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—That a bargain has been entered into between the Government and some members of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman is not in order in imputing such a charge.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—It is not my intention to impute any charge. I am merely saying what I have heard. If it be the case, I should like to know, because I might very likely want to make a bargain myself.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman contends that he is not imputing any charge; but if he brings rumours from the lobbies, or from the gutters, and repeats them in this House, then I say he is imputing motives.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I called him to order for that.

Sir G. GREY.—Speaking to the point of order, Sir, I contend that nothing the honorable gentleman said was out of order; that, where there is every reason to believe that such a transaction has taken place, he was perfectly justified in what he said.

Mr. SPEAKER.—He was not in order in imputing motives, or in using words which would imply corruption.

Sir G. GREY.—I am imputing no motives.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I alluded to the honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Shrimski).

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I beg your pardon; I did not say so.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You stated that you had heard that a bargain had been entered into between the Government and certain members of this House. That was imputing motives, and out of order.

Mr. PITT.—Sir, the present Ministry had a rather offensive term applied to them the other day. They were styled, by members on the other side of the House, "the detective Ministry." Now, if motions such as that of the honorable member for the Thames are to be permitted, I do not know what will be the fitting term to apply to those who move them. We had, last night, something that I think may form a precedent to guide us in this matter. The honorable member for Grey Valley brought up what he conceived to be a matter of privilege, and wished to lay on the table of the House certain private correspondence which had passed between himself and

another person. On that occasion, Sir, you gave it as your opinion that such matters were not worthy of the attention of the House, and upon your recommendation the House very wisely determined not to take any notice of them. If this House once descends to taking notice of every idle rumour circulated in the lobbies, every whisper uttered by disappointed parties in this House, I think we shall have a great deal to do, and that there will be very little hope indeed of the business of the country being performed. I trust, therefore, that the time of the House will not be wasted in discussing matters which may not, for all we know, have any solid foundation in fact, but may simply be the outcome of suggestions made by disappointed politicians in this House.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—Whether these allegations have any foundation in fact or not will be seen on the division. For my part, I refuse to believe that they have; and therefore I regret that we are on the eve of a somewhat stormy debate on the assumption that they have. I am not going to work side by side with men in party struggles in this House for years, and believe they are going to act treacherously with me. I, as a southern member, have given them my faith, and have acted with them in good faith. I have never deceived them, and I refuse to believe that at this moment I and my colleagues of the South are betrayed by members representing northern constituencies for a pot of lucre for their districts. It will be time enough, and it will be a sad moment enough, when we find such to be the fact; but I would ask the House not to assume it to be a fact before the division has shown that it is so, but to act loyally to those who have hitherto stood shoulder to shoulder with us, and not, by unjust suspicions, drive them into that position which perhaps it has never been determined upon that they should take. I think we are quite justified in asking for this correspondence. The Premier has not denied that there has been a negotiation. We know that there have been nothing else but overtures from the Government for the last three weeks that they have been holding on to office—unduly kept in office, unconstitutionally kept in office, when they have been in a minority—in order that they might endeavour to buy the support of members.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman must withdraw that language.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—The word "buy" was an unfortunate one: let me substitute "secure support from." At the same time, Sir, I believe we have seen this session the first instance in which a member of a Government has come from those benches admitting himself betrayed within an interval of three weeks by promises made to him which were not fulfilled and were never intended to be fulfilled. There are many ways of endeavouring to secure support, and I think we must give those honorable gentlemen credit for possessing a knowledge of those ways which has never been equalled by any previous Government. I had intended to ask the honorable gentlemen, but it slipped out of my mind from

day to day, what they were going to do about Chinese immigration; but, really,—

For ways that are dark
And tricks that are vain

they must have so much sympathy with that race of people that I think I may take it as a foregone conclusion that they will not be opposed to their further importation into this country. But, Sir, I am anxious to see the main debate come on. I did not get up to talk on this question, any more than to say, as I said at the outset, that I refuse to believe that I, personally, as a member of a party, am betrayed by any member of that party, and I will not say a word to drive myself into such a belief until I see the fact accomplished. It will be a sad moment, as I have said, if such a thing is possible. Honest government, from that day forward, will be impossible, and we shall have come to a stage in our career when some other form of government will have to be adopted by this country.

Mr. SEDDON.—I shall follow in the same strain as the honorable gentleman who has just sat down. I saw a paragraph in the *Auckland Star* last night which mentioned the names of four honorable members who had entered into a certain undertaking with the Government; but I cannot believe that there is any justification for the appearance of that paragraph. If it is not true, the Government ought to deny it—it is their duty to deny it. If it is true, honest government in this colony is impossible for the future. The paragraph makes this statement—I will not mention the names of the four gentlemen alluded to: They are trying to arrange terms to join the Government. It is believed that Auckland would receive half a million.

Mr. J. B. FISHER.—I think it is convenient that the information asked for should be given, because it is very desirable that it should be ascertained at once whether this country is to be governed by roads and bridges, by men, or by principles. We know very well that for the last three weeks the business of the country has been delayed on the assumption that the Government were in a minority and that the Opposition contained within itself the power of governing the country. These men came to Parliament pledged to certain principles and men. I should like to know whether they have been won over by roads and bridges. I think it desirable that this information should be furnished to the House, so that we may ascertain the reasons which have given rise to a change in the position of parties.

Mr. HISLOP.—When the honorable member for Mount Ida rose I was about to point out that we are just about to enter upon a discussion as to the policy of the Government and as to their character as Administrators. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government says that certain negotiations have been carried on with certain members from Auckland, the result of which would be put into the policy of the Government when it was brought down. I hear some marks of dissent; I do not know whether the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government denies that he made that statement.

Mr. HALL.—I do deny it.

Mr. HISLOP.—Then I can only state what my understanding was; and, assuming that my understanding was correct, it is of the greatest importance that the House should know what negotiations have taken place, so that when the division is taken on the no-confidence motion honorable members will be able to say whether they will or will not vote for the public works policy of the Government, that arrangement being a part of it. For my part, I cannot believe that there are persons on this side of the House who could be guilty of such perfidy as this agreement would show, after having combined with other members on this side of the House as they did. If there are four such persons on this side of the House, I hope they will go over to the other side as quickly as possible, so that we may be rid of them; for I should very much prefer to be on opposite benches to them. I only hope we shall not see such a condition of affairs as that foreshadowed in the telegram read by the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon). I do not know whether the Government intend to oppose the proposition of the honorable member for the Thames; but I hope they will see their way to agree to it. As far as we are concerned on this side of the House, we shall be perfectly prepared to lay before the House any negotiations that have been carried on with any parties whatever. I hope the Government will lay on the table a statement of any negotiations they have entered into with the four members who are said to be going to walk over to their side of the House.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I think it would conduce to the furtherance of the business of this House if the Government would state whether they have a majority or not. If they say that they can go into the lobby with a certain number of members, the best way is to test their strength by a division upon the proposal of the honorable member for the Thames. The position of parties has been a matter of great anxiety to the public, and I do not consider that this 10 per cent. which it is proposed to give should in any sense affect the larger questions at issue. It seems probable that these negotiations will break up the North Island party; but I hope there will be a better state of things on this side of the House.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I think the Premier ought to answer the question. It is a matter that has agitated the minds of honorable members on this side of the House for the last two days, and I understand that what is asked for is, that information should be laid before the House, before we grant supplies, as to whether an arrangement has been made with certain members that the expenditure of a large sum of money in their district shall be the condition of their crossing over to that side of the House. It seems impossible that these gentlemen, on the eve of going into battle, should change sides in that manner. It is of great importance to the country to know whether such negotiations have been entered into, because the character of its public men is at stake. If true, it will be regarded as a matter of sorrow from one end of the country

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to the other. If the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government does not clear the matter up, I shall feel compelled to vote for the amendment of the honorable member for the Thames.

Mr. McLEAN.—What fine actors those honorable gentlemen are! I have heard of telegrams floating all over the South, sent from the friends of honorable gentlemen on that side. We have had all sorts of rumours of some very curious things.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I rise to a point of order. I referred to a certain rumour that was in circulation, and I was stopped on the ground that I was imputing motives. I ask whether the honorable gentleman is not imputing motives.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the language of the honorable member for Waikouaiti is calculated to give offence to some honorable gentlemen.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Shrimski) wished to create a feeling of discontent by referring to these telegrams sent containing statements which had no foundation. It will be seen, when the Government bring down their policy, whether there is anything unworthy in what they have done. As to rumours, I have heard some extraordinary rumours as to offers that have been made by members of the Opposition. One man was to have this, another was to have that. About twenty portfolios were to be given away, and as much Native land as they liked to ask for. All sorts of things were promised.

Mr. MOSS.—I rise to a point of order. The honorable member is really aspersing the characters of members of the Opposition. He does not mention names, but that makes the matter worse, for he includes us all.

Mr. SPEAKER.—What is the language you take exception to?

Mr. MOSS.—The honorable member says that members are being bribed by promises of Native lands and portfolios. I should like the honorable gentleman to make the matter more clear by mentioning names.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I did not understand the honorable gentleman to prefer specific charges. I will observe the honorable gentleman's language more carefully.

Mr. McLEAN.—I merely mentioned that, as these honorable gentlemen were bringing up rumours, there were other rumours which might be brought up; and, if the correspondence relating to one set of rumours is to be brought up, we ought to have the correspondence relative to the other set. I say at once that we should reject such a motion without discussion. I am perfectly satisfied of the honor of the Government, and am confident they will not do anything that will disgrace this House. They are men of honor such as we have not had there for some time, and it is not to be supposed that, because former Governments did these things, they will do them.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I quite agree with the honorable gentleman who has just sat down. We have a Government that is incapable of doing wrong, and they have therefore no need to hide their actions. There are two reasons why this correspondence should be produced. The first is that,

if any promises have been made to any particular district, it will insure those promises being kept. The next is, that it will show young members the proper mode of obtaining what they want from Ministers. I hope the consciousness of the unimpeachable character of the Ministry, and the consciousness that they have nothing but the interest of the colony at heart, will induce honorable members to go into the lobby with the honorable member for the Thames. It seems to me to be desirable, from every point of view, that this should be done. With respect to the statement that offers of every sort had been made, including portfolios, I hope the Hon. the Premier will give a full and explicit statement, which will be a guide to us young members as to how we should conduct ourselves in these delicate negotiations in the future.

Mr. MURRAY.—We have heard a great deal about liberty and independence, and we have had put before us the course that honorable members of this House should pursue. What are we constituting ourselves into? Are we going to reconstitute the tribunal of the Inquisition, and bring honorable members up to the bar of this House to ratten and intimidate them? We have heard of the saw-grinders in England and the terrorism exercised by Broadheadism, and I should like to know if the same course is to be pursued here by a certain section of this House. If so, I think, instead of the "Saw-Grinders' Union," we should call them the "Axe-Grinders' Union." We are charged with making insinuations against those whose whole course of conduct is to throw out insinuations of the basest kind against the characters of others. I judge those honorable gentlemen opposite by their actions, not their words, and I condemn them. "'Tis they who say it, and not we: they do the deeds, and their unrighteous deeds find us the words." We hear much about liberty, but I ask, is this a true principle of liberty, that men shall be denied the right to hold their convictions, and to take that course which they think best for the good of their country? We are constrained, in the words of Madame Roland, to exclaim, "O, liberty! liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name!"

Mr. ANDREWS.—I rise, Sir, as a disappointed man, and I want to tell you why. I say I am disappointed in this way: The Ministry—and especially the Premier—asked the House to give them fair-play—to give them time to investigate into the affairs of State. The honorable gentleman further asked that he might have time to mature his scheme of policy, and then he would submit to the vote of the House as to whether it had confidence in him or not. I have waited for a statement of this policy, but up to the present time we have not had it. We have had no conclusive expression of their investigations, nor have we had any statement of their policy laid before us; and yet now, for some reason or other, which I am not prepared to state, the Government ask the House to come to a vote at once upon this want-of-confidence motion before they give us the statement they asked time to produce. I ask, is that fair-play? If so, I am

sadly deceived, or I am not capable of understanding the word. I have learned this, however: that I must at all events believe less in those persons whom I have hitherto learned to respect. I am not wishful to ask Ministers to divulge anything in this way, for I take it that, instead of Ministers going out of their way to catch fluttering birds, there are plenty of fluttering birds about ready to catch at anything on which to rest their feet.

Mr. MACANDREW.—It is perhaps not necessary to answer the reckless assertions of the honorable member for Waikouaiti; but I beg to say, as far as I am, concerned or know, that no offers of portfolios, or land, or anything else have been made within the last three weeks by the party with which I am connected. I wish to state that distinctly. Our desire was to take the fortress first, and then talk about those other matters. There have been no promises whatever made.

Mr. IRELAND.—I hope and trust the Premier will see his way, in the interest not only of the Government itself, but of the colony at large, to answer at once the accusations suggested by the amendment of the honorable member for the Thames. We heard the other evening that the statement made by the Colonial Treasurer was calculated to damage the credit of the colony in the eyes of people at Home, and that it was particularly unfortunate just at a time when a loan was being negotiated; but I ask, if that statement was likely to injure the colony in the eyes of the Home people, how much more would not the state of affairs pointed at in the amendment of the honorable member for the Thames impair our credit? I have not had the honor—if I can still call it an honor—of holding a seat in this House for any length of time, but, if there be any truth in the suggestions of that amendment, then I say I should no longer look upon it as an honor to sit here. I hold that this House, and especially Ministers, should be above suspicion with regard to such transactions, and I hope the Premier will see his way at once to give a denial to the charges embraced in the rumours that are floating about. There cannot be a single doubt that rumours are floating about, and that already suspicion naturally enough rests not only on the Government, but on the honorable members implicated in the charges. If no such denial is given, it would not surprise me to witness a scene similar to that which occurred the other evening, when we saw an honorable member of the Maori race get up and leave the Government. Sir, if it were possible for political corruption to go to the extent to which I have referred, is it any wonder that the stench of that corruption should be so great as to offend the olfactory nerves of that honorable gentleman, and thus cause him to abandon those benches? I trust there is no foundation in fact for these rumours, and that the Government will clear themselves of the imputations which otherwise must attach to them.

Mr. SHEPARD.—In this very painful discussion there is one point very unfair to the great body of Auckland members. The honorable member for Hokitika read a copy of what

purported to be a telegram that appeared in the *Auckland Evening Star*, referring to four honorable members, without giving their names. Those four names can be picked out by any honorable member of the House, and, in justice to the remainder of the Auckland members, I think those four should be named. Besides that, it seems to me that the four gentlemen named should have an opportunity of defending themselves before the House. It will be for them to say whether there is any truth in the matter, and, if not, to deny the charge of corruption imputed to them.

Mr. TOLE.—As the imputation contained in the amendment of the honorable member for the Thames is of a general character with respect to the Auckland members, and as I feel that I hold a very solemn trust from my constituents, and believing that a general rumour of this kind going forth might include me, I desire to announce to the House, to the world at large, and especially to my constituents, that I am not one of those implicated in any way either by correspondence or by verbal communications with the Government.

Mr. LONDON.—I, too, am one of the members from the Auckland district, and I venture to say that, although I am a young member of the House, I have done more to purge this Chamber of Auckland rats than any other member of it. There are gentlemen on those benches for whom I have a great respect, but I came here to join a party, and I wish it to be understood that I do not belong to those upon whom aspersions are cast by this amendment. Being only a young member, I will not name the gentlemen who I have heard have joined the Government, although I think they ought to be named by some older member. I hope the honorable member for the Thames will press his amendment to a division, when I shall certainly follow him. If it then turns out that four Auckland members have joined the Government party, I shall vote against everything in the interests of Auckland for the remainder of the session, and join the Otago members, so that the Auckland people may see who have sold themselves to the Government without the knowledge or consent of the party.

Mr. MOSS.—I am sorry to be obliged again to refer to the tables attached to the Financial Statement. I find, in page 9 of those tables, a sum of £354,913 put down in the expenditure for the year 1878-79, and I find the same sum put down at page 12 amongst the estimated expenditure for the year 1879-80. I should like to have some explanation from the honorable gentleman as to that amount, because it seems to me that in estimating the deficiency for the year he has over-estimated it by that sum. I think the honorable gentleman must have included that sum twice over. That is how I read the figures placed before us, and I think it is due to honorable members that the honorable gentleman should at once say whether I am wrong, for we have no possible means of judging absolutely from the table before us. From the statement of the expenditure for the year 1878-79 being so much in excess of that for the previous year, I am led to believe this

Mr. Shepherd

sum of £354,913 has been inadvertently included in it.

Major ATKINSON.—The honorable gentleman must not imagine that it is out of any discourtesy to him that I do not answer him now. If I did, I should lose my right of reply. When I reply, I shall dispose of his objection very easily.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question;" upon which a division was called for.

The Tellers reported that the numbers were—Ayes, 24; noes, 54.

Mr. ANDREWS.—Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask your ruling whether a member, after he gives his voice with the "Ayes," can vote with the "Noes."

Mr. SPEAKER.—A member must vote according to the way in which he gives his voice. Do you think any honorable member voted with the "Noes," after giving his voice with the "Ayes"?

Mr. ANDREWS.—I think the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer and the honorable member for Geraldine did so.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Colonial Treasurer, I find, voted with the "Noes." On which side did the Colonial Treasurer give his voice?

Major ATKINSON.—Before the bell rang I gave my voice with the "Ayes." Afterwards I did not give my voice at all.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must record your vote according to the way in which you first gave your voice—with the "Ayes." I find the honorable member for Geraldine voted with the "Ayes." Which way did the honorable member give his voice?

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I do not recollect. As a point of order, may I ask, Mr. Speaker, if I can communicate with you, as I cannot make my voice heard in the House?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Geraldine having assured me that he has no recollection of how he gave his voice, I think we may fairly conclude that his voice must have been given in the way he voted.

Mr. GEORGE.—I wish to call attention to the fact that the Premier, the Minister for Public Works, and the Minister of Lands gave their voices with the "Ayes."

Mr. McLEAN.—Mr. Speaker, is it right for any one to pick out honorable members as having given their voices in a certain way, after having asked other honorable members if that were the case?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Has the honorable member for Rodney distinct knowledge that the Premier gave his voice with the "Ayes"?

Mr. GEORGE.—It is impossible that I could have distinct knowledge. The voices came from that direction.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot take that.

Mr. SEDDON.—I speak from personal knowledge. When the voices were given first, I heard the Premier, the Colonial Treasurer, and the honorable member for Avon give their voices with the "Ayes."

Mr. SPEAKER.—Under these circumstances,

I must ask the Premier which way he gave his voice.

Mr. HALL.—On the first occasion I gave my voice with the “Ayes.” On the second occasion I cannot recollect which way I gave my voice. I do not think I gave it at all.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member’s vote will have to be recorded with the “Ayes.” I find the Minister of Lands voted with the “Noes.” Which way did the honorable gentleman give his voice?

Mr. ROLLESTON.—May I ask the honorable member for Hokitika where I was when he heard my voice?

Mr. SEDDON.—I think the honorable member was at the back of the Government benches.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—When I was coming into the House, and was at the door, the voices were being given, and I gave my voice with neither.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Mr. Rolleston’s vote will not be altered.

Mr. SPEAKER declared the result of the division to be as follows:—

Ayes	...	...	...	...	26
Noes	...	...	...	...	52
Majority against	...	...	...	...	26

AYES.

Mr. Acton Adams,
Major Atkinson,
Mr. Beetham,
Mr. Bowen,
Mr. Dick,
Mr. Fulton,
Mr. Hall,
Mr. H. Hirst,
Mr. Hursthouse,
Mr. Johnston,
Captain Kenny,
Mr. Levin,
Mr. Masters,
Mr. McLean,

Mr. Moorhouse,
Mr. Ormond,
Captain Russell,
Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Tomoana,
Mr. Whyte,
Mr. Willis,
Mr. Wright.

Tellers.

Mr. Murray,
Mr. Pitt.

NOES.

Mr. Andrews,
Mr. Bain,
Mr. Ballance,
Mr. Barron,
Mr. Bryce,
Captain Colbeck,
Mr. Finn,
Mr. J. B. Fisher,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,
Mr. George,
Mr. Gibbs,
Mr. Gieborne,
Sir G. Grey,
Mr. Hamlin,
Major Harris,
Mr. W. J. Hurst,
Mr. Hutchison,
Mr. Ireland,
Mr. Kelly,
Mr. London,
Mr. Macandrew,
Mr. McDonald,

Mr. Reid,
Mr. Richmond,
Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Seddon,
Mr. Seymour,
Mr. Shanks,
Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Shephard,
Mr. Shrimski,
Mr. Speight,
Mr. Stewart,
Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Tainui,
Mr. Tawhai,
Major Te Wheoro,
Mr. Thomson,
Mr. Tole,
Colonel Trimble,
Mr. Turnbull,
Mr. Wakefield,
Dr. Wallis,
Mr. Whitaker,

Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Moss,
Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Pyke,
Mr. Reeves,

Mr. Reader Wood.

Tellers.
Mr. De Lantour,
Mr. Hialop.

PAIR.

For. Mr. Sutton.
Against. Mr. Allwright.

The motion was consequently negatived.

Mr. READER WOOD.—Sir, I am one of the Auckland members alluded to in this matter. There is no correspondence with the Government with which I have had anything to do whatever. I have made neither terms nor arrangements of any kind. I will state to the House precisely the motives which have led me to do what I have done, and I will ask the honorable gentlemen near me, who no doubt are irritated—I knew they would be irritated—whether they will not believe me. They have acted with me upon many occasions, and I have acted with them. I have found them always true to their engagements, and I submit that I have been found true to mine. But what are the engagements? When I contested the District of Waitemata I was particularly cautious, and put in writing, in the address that I published in the newspapers to my constituents, precisely what it was that I meant. I reiterated that on almost every occasion on which I addressed the constituency, and they perfectly and distinctly understood what it was I said and what it was I meant. The words will be found in my address to the electors to be as follow—I cannot quote them absolutely literally, for I have never referred to them since I wrote them; but they were—That I accepted the liberal principles stated in the Governor’s Speech, with which he opened the last session of Parliament, and that I accepted Sir George Grey as leader of the party. Now, I came here, and I supported Sir George Grey up to the very point, aye, and beyond it, when he himself, in opposition to my advice, given privately and given publicly, in what we call a caucus—in opposition, I say, to my advice—he retired from the leadership of the party—(Oh! oh!)—Will honorable gentlemen allow me to state what is my recollection? I would recall honorable gentlemen’s recollection to what took place at the caucus. What did I say? I said, “Our policy now is a waiting policy; let us see what it is these honorable gentlemen are going to do; let us adhere to Sir George Grey, and force him back again upon a reluctant House.”—(No, no.)—I am now referring to the caucus held immediately after the division, and which was held in the Ministers’ room. I have no doubt Sir George Grey recollects it. The words I used must be in the memory of honorable members, if they have got any memories at all. The words were, that we should force Sir George Grey back upon a reluctant House. That is what I said. Sir George Grey himself says that I said this; Mr. Speight says that I said it; and Mr. London says that I said it.

Mr. LUNDON.—I do not say one way or the other, for I do not remember it.

Mr. READER WOOD.—There is not the smallest question that it is so. I was overruled; there was not a human being in the meeting who supported me in that. But another resolution was moved and carried, to which I am now coming. That other resolution was this: that there should be no coalition. To that I agreed, it is true. I held up my hand for it. The charge against me now is this: that I have broken the pledge that I then made. Now, I ask this House whether I can be considered to have broken the pledge that I then made under one set of circumstances, when another set of circumstances three weeks afterwards turn up that no one could possibly foresee. What is the meaning of consenting to anything at a caucus when a resolution is moved and people hold their hands up for it and it is carried? I apprehend that it simply means that under the existing circumstances, which are within our knowledge, we shall do so-and-so. Are we to be bound by that for all time, when other circumstances of an entirely different kind make their appearance?

An Hon MEMBER.—How are the circumstances different?

Mr. READER WOOD.—I am going to tell you how the circumstances differ. We were told on that occasion that, if the course was adopted as proposed—namely, that Sir George Grey should retire from the leadership—there would be a vast accession to our ranks, and that in the course of a very few days we should be able to remove those honorable gentlemen from their seats, and replace them by honorable gentlemen from this side of the House. Now, has that been done? Nearly three weeks afterwards we are in exactly the same position we were in then.—(No.)—There is one difference in the position, and it is the difference that has really made me do what I have done and what I intend to do. The promise that was made to us, or, rather, the proposal that was made to us, three weeks ago has not been carried out. An entirely different set of circumstances have arisen that nobody at that time could have foreseen, and if they could have foreseen them I venture to say that the resolution never would have been carried. Supposing the resolution had been this: that there should be no coalition, but that we should simply wait until the other party were turned out, even if it involved stoppage of supply. I should like to know if there would have been such a response as was given on that occasion. Those are the altered circumstances. I know perfectly well that there are members on this side of the House—that there are members in the party with which I have been acting—who sympathize with me, and who sympathize with my views. I will not say what I was going to say: at any rate, I have the courage of my opinions. I do what I think to be right, in despite of all this noise that is made. What do I know? I know that I shall be execrated on one side as a traitor, and I know that I shall be accepted on the other as a patriot. Now, exaggerated blame and exaggerated praise are alike indifferent to me. I see in this House what are called two parties: but there are really not two parties. There is no difference in

principle between the two sides in this House. The other side have accepted all the Liberal measures. Both sides agree in admitting that the financial affairs of the country are in a sad condition, and that these financial affairs require the immediate and earnest consideration of this House. And yet, through personal feeling and nothing else, we cannot go to work. A deadlock has occurred; and, if I should be the means of unlocking that deadlock, I care nothing for all the noise that is made and for all the abuse I may receive. I shall have done, at any rate, some good to the country. Sir, I am not a model party man. A model party man is he who has always voted at his party's call, and never thought of thinking for himself at all: that is the model party man. A doctrine has been attempted to be laid down here that we are not to do as our intelligence dictates we should do—that we are not to act variously under circumstances that alter and change from day to day and from week to week, but that we are to act upon the dictation of my honorable friend the member for the Thames. Sir, I say that is the case. Let us understand it distinctly, and, instead of having fourteen or fifteen members depending upon him, let a short Bill be passed giving my honorable friend fourteen or fifteen votes, and let us go home. I have no idea myself of being driven into a lobby at the dictation of anybody. I am not responsible to any human being in this House for what I do. I am responsible to—shall I say?—two parties. I am responsible to my constituents, and before them I will answer at any time they like to ask me for an explanation; and I am responsible to my own sense of duty and to my own feeling of right. I say it is not right that the whole business of this country should be stopped, that people should not be paid the money that is fairly due to them, that the finances of the country should be embarrassed, and that we should be trifling here whilst the finances of the country and the whole business of the country are drifting we know not where, simply because one set of gentlemen do not like Mr. A, and another set of gentlemen do not like Mr. B. When we talk of the correspondence about to be asked for, and of bargains that have been made between one side and the other, I would appeal to my honorable friend whether he did not want to make a bargain with me which I refused. The arrangement was this. There is nothing like being free and aboveboard, and perfectly plain. My tongue would have been silent in this House, had not these charges been cast upon us. When my honorable friend was on the eve of retiring from the leadership of the party he did me the honor to send for me to his office. He told me that he had made up his mind to give up the leadership of that party, and he said to me, "I will make a bargain with Mr. Macandrew that you shall be Colonial Treasurer." Now, what was my reply to that? I said, "If you like to retire, you can do so, contrary to my advice; but you make no bargains on my account. Let them do as they please, and leave me alone." Sir, shall I go further? An intimate friend of my honorable friend here, the member for Port

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Chalmers, came to me three days ago, and told me that I was going to be the Premier of the colony. I naturally supposed that it was chaff—and as chaff I treated it. Then I found this: that the friend of my honorable friend had been to the honorable member for Port Chambers in the morning; that he had found him in an anxious frame of mind; that he said he thought he had made a mistake in taking the lead of the party, and would be in a false position if he were Premier of that party, and that his intention was to make me the Premier. Well, Sir, I turned that over in my mind. I am not desirous of office. I fling things from me like dirt when I do not care about them; but, because I do that, it does not follow that I have no ambition—quite the opposite. Well, Sir, I turned this over in my mind, and the result of my consideration was simply this: I thought to myself that, if I were to be pitchforked into a party or into a Government that had been actually formed by my honorable friend, I should be in a false position—I should have no control over that Government—I should have no control over the party that supported it, because it had not formed itself around me and I had not nominated the Government. So I went to my honorable friend the member for Port Chalmers, and I said to him, “I have heard—is it true?—that you are not going to be Premier, in case you carry the vote of no-confidence.” He said to me most distinctly that he thought he had got into a false position—that he was not fitted for it, and that he wished that I should take the office.

Mr. MACANDREW.—That you would be a better man.

Mr. READER WOOD.—He said I should be a better man, but he also said he was unwilling to take the office. I replied, “You are very kind. You have got yourself into a false position, and you want to get out of it by putting me into a false position; but it won’t do.” Then, Sir, I thought of the matter further, and whether I am right or wrong some people will know. Nevertheless, this was the result of my thinking: I thought that, if the Premiership had been offered to me, it might also have been, or might be, offered to other people; and I really did not know whom I was following. My honorable friend the member for the Thames had abandoned the lead, the honorable member for Port Chalmers was particularly anxious to get somebody else than himself to take the lead, and it appeared to me that I was like a wandering sheep without any shepherd: I did not know under whose banner and under whose standard I fought; and I thought that the colony was drifting into a state of affairs which, if it were at all possible to remedy, or assist in remedying, it was my duty to do so. My honorable friend says, “It was chaff.” Now, is it likely to have been chaff? I have repeated the conversation as it took place. Is it likely that an honorable gentleman would begin early in the morning with his chaff to his friend, and then continue it in the evening to me? I should like to know this: If that sort of conversation between the leader of the party and myself is chaff, what is wheat? Why, you can-

not separate the two. And how is it possible to have any confidence in a leader in whose sayings you cannot distinguish between chaff and earnest? Now, Sir, I will tell you how the whole of this business has come about. I was anxious. I saw that the whole thing was drifting I did not know where. I saw no end to this deadlock, as it is called. Even if we succeeded in carrying the vote against the Government I did not see how a Government that could command the confidence of the House could be formed from our side. I may be mistaken, but it certainly was, and is, my absolute conviction that no such Government could be formed. Then, supposing a Government that did not possess the confidence of the House sat on those benches, we should continue to have precisely the same thing going on—a spectacle for gods and men—that has been going on for the last three weeks. I said to myself, “Who is there in the Auckland party to whom I can go who can think for himself, and who can give me advice?” Sir, I pitched upon Mr. Swanson. I knew him to be an independent man. I knew him to have the interests of Auckland at heart. I knew him to be a man in whom not only his constituents, but the whole people of Auckland, had the most perfect confidence. I had no sooner broached the subject than he said he felt as I did—he did not see where we were going or what was to come out of this. So we put our heads together to see if we could not contrive to do something or other. With the assistance of my honorable friend Mr. Hurst and the assistance of my honorable friend Mr. Colbeck we made up our minds simply to go and tell the Government that, if they liked, upon certain things being understood between us—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, oh!

Mr. READER WOOD.—But I am going to tell what the things were; I intend to tell the whole affair; nothing will be concealed. The honorable member for Newton (Mr. Swanson) went and saw one Minister—I do not know which. I do not know what took place with regard to that, excepting that the honorable gentleman told me that the Government, if we went over, were willing to agree to certain conditions. The first was, I think, that there was to be no interference with the existing educational system. The second, I think, was that the measures that we call the liberal measures should be carried—there should be no burking of them. And the third was—and now, Sir, here is the point honorable members are all anxious about—the third was this—I do not know whether I am using the exact words which my honorable friend used to me, but, at any rate, I am stating the meaning: that an account should be made up showing the expenditure that had taken place on public works in different parts of the colony, and another account made up showing the expenditure that had taken place on public works in the Provincial District of Auckland; that, if that account showed that Auckland had not received a proportionate share to that which other districts had received, then in some way it should get the balance of the share it ought to get. Now, Sir,

there is the murder out. There is no specified sum of any kind. It may turn out, for all I know, that there is no balance—that there is not a sixpence. But we did ask this. The people of Auckland say—we see it in the newspapers, and we hear it at the elections and everywhere—that Auckland has been unjustly treated; that it has not had a fair share; that the South has had a much larger expenditure; that Otago—especially under the *régime* of my honorable friend the member for Port Chalmers—has had an enormous expenditure, whilst Auckland has had next to nothing. We do not know whether that is so or not, but the Government agreed that an account should be prepared to show if it were the case or not. Well, if it turn out that Auckland has been neglected, that it has not had that just share of expenditure which its population and revenue required—for it must be remembered that we pay interest upon the whole expenditure—then I put it to both parties in this House whether it is a fair thing or an unfair thing that the position should be considered. That is what we ask for. And now, Sir, let me tell you another thing. When it became known, as of course it soon did, that something of this sort was going on, we were asked by the other side, “Why, you are making terms with the Government! Can’t you make as good terms with us?” There are the purists! Now, I do not care what I do—if I do wrong I avow it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Name.

Mr. READER WOOD.—Name whom?

An Hon. MEMBER.—The purists.

Mr. READER WOOD.—Oh, I do not know who the purists are; but we were told in the Auckland caucus to-day, “Can’t you make as good terms with us?” This was at the caucus to-day—actually before it was done. Now, I ask, under these circumstances, whether we have acted rightly or wrongly. I ask whether we have acted as honest and independent men. Stop; I have got something else to say—I should be very sorry to forget that. There is a portfolio vacant over on those benches. It was offered to me by the Government, Sir. What did I say? I said, “Offer it to Mr. Hurst. I do not want office.” And when I came over I went to Mr. Hurst and I said, “Look here: there is a portfolio to be had—go and take it.” Now, Sir, so far as I am concerned, that is the position I occupy in this business; and, if I am degraded, if I am a traitor, if I am all these horrible things that I am going to be called, I should just like to know who is an honest and straightforward man. I knew what I was about: nobody can by any possibility suppose I did not. Nobody can suppose that on leaving that party I did not know that gentlemen would be very angry indeed. I know that they will be very angry and will abuse me very much, and my intention throughout the whole thing is to sit perfectly quietly and listen to it all. They shall have the satisfaction of my hearing every word, and they may depend upon it that I shall not reply. I shall have the satisfaction, I hope, at any rate, of knowing that I have been instrumental, perhaps in a very small degree, in open-

ing this deadlock, that seemed to be closed so that no power could open it. I hope I shall be instrumental in opening it, and so enable this Parliament to consider the important affairs of the colony, and not allow the public business to drift into confusion for the sake of mere personalities.

Sir G. GREY rose to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable gentleman has already spoken.

Sir G. GREY.—Not on this point.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You moved the amendment.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—To remove the difficulty, I move, That the House do now adjourn.

Sir G. GREY.—I presume I may give reasons why the House should not adjourn until I have made an explanation in regard to this matter. I speak not in anger—in fact, I may say that I feel no anger towards the honorable gentleman who has just spoken—but I confess that I feel sorry, for I think the honorable gentleman has shown that he has not considered the course that he has taken in a logical aspect—that he has not fairly reasoned out in his own mind his position and his duty to the party to which he belongs. I intend to cast no reflections whatever upon the course he has taken, and which I suppose he is satisfied in his own mind he was justified in taking; but I will give reasons why I should not have pursued the same course. Forty-two gentlemen entered into an agreement that they would form no coalition until the vote which had been so long pending was taken. That agreement was deliberately come to. I believe that I could not honorably depart from that agreement, and I contend that, in point of honor, no man was justified in breaking off that agreement. Now, to show how illogical the honorable gentleman’s mind is, I will mention this fact: He and I belonged to the same party, and we found it impossible to force our views upon a reluctant House. We had conversations as friends and as members of the same party. I had no bribe to offer him to induce him to belong to our side, because he already belonged to it. My duty was to consider what was best for New Zealand—what was best to secure the carrying out of the views I entertained—what was best to secure the fulfilment of the views of the gentlemen with whom I was associated; and I undoubtedly did say that, if a new Government was formed, he ought to take the position of Colonial Treasurer, because I believed he was, by natural capacity and natural thoughtfulness, more fitted to do good in the present embarrassed financial position of New Zealand than any other gentleman that I knew. I asked him to promise that he would take that office if a new Government was formed. But that was not asking him to leave his party: that was not asking him to enter into a treaty with me to bring him over to my views. It was one friend speaking to another—one member of a party speaking to another member of the same party—and consulting earnestly with him for the good of the colony. There is no analogy between that and entering into a treaty with the Government on the other side of the House. The honorable gentleman altogether went astray on these two

Mr. Reader Wood

points, and he led the House astray. And I say further that, having determined to enter into negotiations of that nature with the other side of the House, the honorable gentleman ought to have communicated with us, and not with one or two members only. He should have told the whole party that he was about to break the engagement into which he had entered, and the circumstances, honorable or dishonorable, which induced him to follow that course. I say, with sorrow, that I think he acted wrongly in not doing that. Then, again, I say that he acted altogether illogically in this respect. To-day he says that, having told his friends, the Auckland members, that he had entered into terms with the Government, they said to him, "Why did you not come and enter into terms with us?" Now, I contend that this is an unintentional misrepresentation of the case. What we felt, and what we endeavoured to express, was, that he had asked for what any member representing Auckland had a right to ask, but that he ought to have told us that he was going to agree to such things, instead of entering into terms with the Government without letting us know anything about it. I say that in all fairness, concerting with us as he did, he ought to have said to us, "I am about to ask for such-and-such things, because I can get them in no other way." We should have made the natural answer, "Why should you go? We all agree with you on the point of which you speak." And now the honorable gentleman tells the House that we endeavoured to bribe him back.

Mr. READER WOOD.—I did not say you endeavoured to bribe me.

Sir G. GREY.—But you said that in order to influence you to return I said, "Could you not come to us, and get the same terms?" We did not look upon it as making terms at all. I therefore confess that it was with absolute sorrow that I heard the honorable gentleman say that such a thing took place. It was quite certain the Opposition would have had a majority of six, and, after that vote had been taken, we should have had a much larger majority.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—I say Yes. I have no doubt as to the accuracy of what I say. Now, the action of those honorable gentlemen will have such an effect that the Government will not have a majority of six. I think, on the contrary, that when the division is taken on the want-of-confidence motion it will be found that other gentlemen will come over to us. A shock has been given to the public mind which will cause other gentlemen, as they ought in fairness, to vote with us. Honorable gentlemen may laugh, but I say that what has taken place will give a great shock to public feeling throughout the country. It is a thing I shall always lament myself. But I do not look upon it as an irretrievable misfortune. I think good will come out of it, because I think that so bad an example has been given that other people will be deterred from following it henceforth. I do not think the honorable gentleman's arguments will stand with any unprejudiced mind as a justification of the course he has taken. If,

instead of attacking me for having endeavoured to persuade him to take the Treasurership, he had stood up and said, "I believe that what I am doing is for the benefit of New Zealand, and I am determined to do it," I should have understood him; but his justification is no justification at all.

Mr. READER WOOD.—I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. All sorts of aspersions were cast upon us. It was said that we had been making bargains, and so forth; and I simply told the truth as to what had taken place on both sides.

Sir G. GREY.—The point I was raising was, that there were no bargains at all. I did not say, "Will you join our side, and become Colonial Treasurer? Will you abandon the others?"

Mr. READER WOOD.—I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. I have a good memory for words. The honorable gentleman absolutely said he would make a bargain with Mr. Macandrew that I should be Colonial Treasurer. If he did not say that, I will never pretend to recollect words again.

Sir G. GREY.—The honorable gentleman cannot see the point. I had no bargain to make. I was authorized to say by the gentlemen with whom I was acting, "There is a person who is qualified to act as Treasurer during the present financial difficulties of the colony. He is a friend of ours; he is one of our party; and I think you must agree that he is the best man to put in the position of Colonial Treasurer." There was no bargain there. Did we sell ourselves for such a purpose? Did we agree to abandon our friends for such a purpose? If I had gone to the Government and said, "Will you take the honorable member for Waitemata into your Ministry as Colonial Treasurer?" that would have been a bargain; but in this there was no bargain at all. It was two friends making an arrangement, as they thought, for the benefit of the colony—an arrangement which they had a perfect right to make—an arrangement which broke no prior agreement into which a large body of gentlemen had entered amongst themselves. That is the point. But I wish to say nothing unkind. The honorable gentleman has endeavoured to satisfy his own convictions. I do not say that his motives are not good—I do not say that he had not a desire to benefit the country in what he did; but I cannot dismiss from my mind the belief that he has done more harm by the step he has taken than anything the other side can do. I believe his action will have a most prejudicial effect upon our public life. In my own case I feel altogether shaken at the present moment. There were no circumstances to justify the step. I do not now know what to expect. No man can tell what may occur. I say that we were certain of a majority. If we had asserted our majority, as we were prepared to do, and a discussion had arisen as to what kind of Ministry should be formed, then the honorable gentleman would have been justified in leaving us if he did not approve of what we did; but I do say that the step he has taken is most unfortunate for the country, and a step that will be most unfortunate for party

government in this country for many years to come.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 2).

Major ATKINSON.—With permission of the House, I should like to ask the honorable member for the Thames if he would agree to pass the Supply Bill through, as honorable members of another place have consented to meet again to-night to pass it. If we do not pass it this evening it cannot be passed before Tuesday, and great inconvenience to the public service must ensue, as we have already gone so long without supply. In order to give the honorable gentleman an opportunity afterwards of resuming his speech, I shall be happy on the part of the Government either to move that the House do again go into Committee of Supply, or to bring up the want-of-confidence motion, in either of which cases the honorable gentleman will be able to resume his speech, and the debate can go on until we come to a decision.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not see my way accurately to fall into the honorable gentleman's proposal. As I understand it the question is this: A sudden defection has taken place from the Opposition, and the Government were not willing at first to produce any written documents connected with that defection, or make any statement with regard to it. I thereupon moved an amendment to the effect that these documents should be produced; and upon that amendment another amendment was moved, and the Government would have been beaten by a considerable majority upon the second amendment if they had not resorted to the device of abandoning their own side and going into the opposite lobby, so as to appear to acquiesce in the proposal. I had therefore the pleasure of finding fifty-two honorable members voting with me. The Government went so far as to cry out "Aye" and vote "No," thus belying what they had said.

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—I repeat that such was the case; and the Treasurer did so himself. And now, what I am asked to do is, I believe, to abandon that amendment.

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—Then I ask that it may be carried without further discussion. As the adjournment of the House upon which we were speaking was moved to enable me to speak, I do not see how, if we now go into Committee of Supply, we are to go back to the position in which we were before. I regard the subject on which I was speaking as one of the most important subjects that could be possibly brought before the House. The honor of the public men of New Zealand is involved in it, and therefore if I get an assurance that we can resume it I will not object to go on with Supply in the meantime.

Sir G. Grey

Major ATKINSON.—As I understand, there would be no difficulty whatever in going back to the same subject. I am only speaking in the public interest, which I understand the honorable gentleman also wishes to forward. After we have gone through Supply I will again move that you leave the chair in order to go into Committee of Supply, or my honorable friend the Premier will move that the remaining Orders of the day and notices of motion be postponed in order to take the no-confidence motion. In either of those cases the honorable gentleman can bring up any subject he may think proper, as the ordinary rules of debate are suspended in such cases. We are prepared to let the honorable gentleman's amendment go on the voices, and then go into Supply; and afterwards we will take whatever course the honorable gentleman wishes, so as to get back to the debate.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not want to stop supplies, and if any fair arrangement can be made I shall be glad to agree to it. But I think the subject we were engaged on is the most important that has ever engaged the attention of the Parliament of New Zealand, and I should like the debate upon it to be resumed and carried on until completed.

Motion for the adjournment of the House negatived, and amendment agreed to.

The House went into Committee of Supply, and gave leave to introduce the Imprest Supply Bill (No. 2), which was read a first, a second, and a third time.

AUCKLAND MEMBERS.

Mr. HALL.—The granting of supply having been disposed of, perhaps the honorable gentleman will state whether he prefers resuming the discussion on the motion for going into Supply, or whether he is prepared to go on with the want-of-confidence motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers. We will leave the honorable gentleman to state what course he wishes to take.

Mr. GISBORNE.—I understood the Colonial Treasurer was to propose a resolution in Committee of Ways and Means authorizing payments to be made of subsidies to local bodies.

Major ATKINSON.—As it is only a resolution in Committee of Supply, it does not matter whether or not it is passed to-night. It can be brought forward on Tuesday next.

Mr. GISBORNE.—The honorable gentleman stated that his table was groaning with applications from local bodies for payment of subsidies. The delay of two days makes a serious difference to the local bodies.

Major ATKINSON.—I thought the honorable gentleman knew something about governing the country. He is quite aware that I can use supplies for this purpose. I am not now in want of cash.

Mr. GISBORNE.—The honorable member for Tuapeka asked the honorable gentleman whether the Imprest Supply Bill would enable the payments to the local bodies to be made. I understood him to say that a resolution would be required to be passed in Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Will all the subsidies be paid to-morrow?

Major ATKINSON.—No; they cannot all be paid to-morrow. We can begin to pay some of them. The law permits me to pay the subsidies so long as I have sufficient money in hand.

Mr. HALL.—Will the honorable member for the Thames state which course he prefers to adopt—which of the two courses pointed out would be most convenient for him?

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, the Hon. the Premier is very ready to go into the want-of-confidence motion to-night, which has been delayed so long. There was a distinct understanding that, if I would agree to Supply being taken first, the Colonial Treasurer would move again that you do leave the chair. I wish that understanding carried out.

Major ATKINSON.—There was no distinct understanding to that effect. There were two courses for the honorable gentleman to pursue. The Hon. the Premier was quite right in putting the alternative to the honorable member which I put myself.

Sir G. GREY.—I distinctly understood that the House would go back to the motion for going into Supply.

Major ATKINSON.—The honorable gentleman having elected not to go into the no-confidence motion, I move, That you do leave the chair in order that the House may go into Committee of Supply.

Sir G. GREY.—I move, That the debate be adjourned to permit of papers asked for being brought up. Speaking to that motion, I shall have to review what I think is one of the saddest transactions that have perhaps ever occurred in the history of the Parliament of New Zealand. I shall make my statement in such a way as not to irritate anybody. I shall simply state facts and explain points in my own conduct which have been animadverted upon. A large body of gentlemen pledged themselves to one another to have no coalition and to take no steps until the want-of-confidence motion had been debated in this House and disposed of. I say that three of these gentlemen certainly agreed to that motion: they pledged themselves to it. I pledged myself also to the same arrangement, and some forty or forty-one gentlemen pledged themselves to it. With the exception of these three gentlemen every one of the forty-one gentlemen believed that without breach of honor it was not possible to go back from that agreement. Now, we have a right to our opinions; they have a right to theirs. I shall state what our opinions are. These three gentlemen having departed from that arrangement, the honorable member for Waitemata this evening brought an accusation against myself. He stated, as a justification for the Government party having made proposals, that I had made a proposal to him—that the proposal I had made to him was that, upon a Government being formed from the Opposition side of the House, he should take the position of Colonial Treasurer. Sir, I certainly did make that proposal, and it was my earnest wish that he would accept it. It was my decided opinion that he ought to be

in that position, for I believed that, from his ability and experience, he would be able to cope with the financial difficulties of the country. The honorable member further stated that I said I would make it a condition with the honorable member for Port Chalmers that such should be the case—that if I was not to make a bargain with him I was to make one with the honorable member for Port Chalmers. I defend myself against that accusation by stating this: that the honorable member for Waitemata was a member of the party with myself, and was bound in a common agreement with me. Making such a proposal could have had no influence, directly or indirectly, in getting him to join the party. Talking over the subject amongst friends, amongst members of the same party, is a totally different thing from going to the Government, when you are in opposition, and asking the Government questions of that kind, or receiving offers of that kind from the Government. I do not see how a conversation of that sort between members of the Opposition could be the same thing as a compact entered into with gentlemen sitting on the Government benches. I do not believe that the honorable gentleman would enter into any compact to take office himself: that is my absolute and decided opinion. But I think it is just as bad to propose that an office should be taken by another honorable member of the same party, and so cause him to leave this side of the House and go to the opposite side. The honorable gentleman brought a general accusation against the party. He said that when he informed the Auckland members that he had entered into a certain arrangement with the Government, and accepted certain terms from them, some of them said, "Why did you not come to us for those terms?" There is no analogy whatever between the two cases. If the party which was about to form a Government had offered terms to him to induce him to join us, it would be considered a question between friends. As far as I know the terms, there was nothing that we could not feel ourselves justified in being a party to. There was no excuse for his passing over to the other side of the House. I go a little further; and I confess I do so with sorrow. In justifying his conduct to us, he stated that part of the terms made with the Government was that they should bring in such liberal measures as the whole House was agreed upon. That was really not exacting anything from them but what they had promised the country and Parliament to do. I confess that I am so grieved and so astonished that I hardly know in what terms to characterize what has taken place. It has altogether for the time shaken my confidence in my fellow-men. Several other points were mentioned by the honorable gentleman. I think, to a certain extent, he has hardly acted so well as I should have wished on some points. For instance, he told the House that part of the agreement—I do not wish to misrepresent him in any way—that part of the agreement entered into with the Government was that certain accounts should be made out showing how moneys had been expended in different parts of the country, that a balance should be struck, and that any wrong

done to Auckland should be made good; and then he went on to say it might mean nothing at all. I am informed positively that he has induced the people of Auckland to believe it may possibly amount to £500,000—that that was by his authority telegraphed to Auckland.

Mr. READER WOOD.—No, I never authorized it to be telegraphed.

Sir G. GREY.—Well, the honorable gentleman made that statement to a gentleman who he knew was certain to telegraph it. There is a wonderful difference between the two statements. It comes out very softly to say in this House the balance may be nothing, and it is very encouraging to certain persons in Auckland to be told that this arrangement may possibly give Auckland £500,000. There is a wide margin between the two. I still hope that at the last moment those honorable gentlemen will feel that it is better that this no-confidence motion should be taken under the original agreement; and then let new arrangements be made. Let the original agreement be adhered to. Altogether I felt distressed beyond measure when I heard that the honorable member for Auckland City West was told to go over and get a portfolio—concealing the truth from us that negotiations were going on between him and the Government at the time he was acting with us, and urging that no coalition should take place. It is no argument to say that different circumstances had arisen. He ought to have come and told us that he had changed his mind; that he considered the compact between him and his party was over, and that he considered he was a free man. I regret extremely he did not do that. There is another honorable gentleman who acted very differently, the honorable member for Marsden. He did come to me, and spoke in a manner I shall always remember with feelings of pleasure, and told me that, consequent upon my retirement from the leadership of the party, he considered he was free—that I was the person to whom he was engaged, and that, as I no longer led the party, he considered he was free. I at once replied in the same spirit, saying that, so far as I was concerned, he was free—that I had nothing else to expect from him. I will pass on to another interesting matter, and that is the division which took place this evening. That is the one thing which fills me with confidence. I believe that the truth is mighty and must prevail. I suppose such a thing as happened this evening was never witnessed in the world before. I think not. A large number of members suddenly rushed from one side of the House to the other in order that they might not appear to be defeated: but they were defeated. The Government resisted the motion I brought forward—absolutely resisted it. They called for a division.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—They called for a division.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—They called for a division.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—I have no doubt upon the point. When the question was put, "Those who are in favour of retaining the words will say Aye," I heard those honorable members say "Aye."

Sir G. Grey

They pledged themselves to vote "Aye" by crying out "Aye;" but the moment they found the "Noes" would carry a great majority, at once they abandoned their cry and rushed into the opposite lobby, and made up a party of fifty-two members. I stood apparently hopelessly defeated, and yet such was the power of truth that I was victorious. I have made this statement with the greatest possible regret. I do not wish to hurt anybody's feelings. I have simply tried to clear myself and the party from the aspersions thrown upon us. I am bewildered and sad—in fact, I do not know that any such blow has ever before come upon me in my public life; but I feel that I shall before long be followed into the lobbies by a majority. I feel certain such a coalition cannot last. Their majority is small, and I believe within a week or ten days that majority will melt away to nothing, and that, instead of their having a triumph, the triumph will be given to us. I feel sure that throughout New Zealand there will be a general feeling that we have been badly treated, that we require support, and that that support we shall have from every part of the country and from a majority of this House. I call upon honorable gentlemen who have been long connected with me not to despond, but to rely upon it we shall yet triumph, and that we shall yet put our feet on those foes who have united to trample us under foot.

Mr. REID.—I cannot allow the remarks made by the honorable member for Waitemata to pass without comment. I listened with great attention to the honorable gentleman; but I must say I think such a lamentable attempt at excuse for a political somersault was never before seen in the Assembly of New Zealand. I speak as a young member in this Assembly; but, having had experience in one capacity and another in numerous small governing bodies, I have never seen such an exhibition as this, even in the smallest public bodies on the West Coast. Before coming to this House, I had been taught to look up to the leading men, such as the honorable member for Waitemata, as examples for a political career in future years; but the value of such an example as that which the honorable gentleman has this day set us is not very great. The honorable gentleman not only referred to what had taken place between himself and other gentlemen—the honorable member for the Thames and the honorable member for Port Chalmers—which was a breach of faith—but also to what took place at the caucuses of the party. Now, I happen to know something of what took place in these caucuses, and I know how the honorable gentleman himself behaved at these meetings. I remember the meeting of the party to which the honorable gentleman refers, in the Ministerial room, before we decided to go into opposition, and evidently that honorable gentleman must have meant at that meeting to throw overboard the honorable member for the Thames.

Mr. READER WOOD.—No.

Mr. REID.—To my mind, it must have been so, because—the honorable gentleman will correct me if I am wrong—the proposer of the honorable member for Port Chalmers as leader of the

Opposition was the honorable member for Waitemata. The cry was raised that there should be no coalition. I did not agree with it, and I spoke against the proposal, but was talked down. The honorable member for Waitemata was one of the chief spokesmen on that occasion. He, above all others, insisted there should be no coalition. When a show of hands was demanded in favour of the resolution rejecting the idea of coalition, I did not hold up my hand, but still I said I would hold to the party. The honorable member for Waitemata, however, held up his hand for the resolution. Of that I am sure, because I was sitting close to him; and, moreover, he spoke strongly in favour of the new leader of the Opposition, and said we must stick to our leader throughout the whole session.

Mr. READER WOOD.—May I ask whether our leader has stuck to us?

Mr. REID.—The honorable gentleman asks whether our leader has stuck to us. I think so. I would further call the remembrance of the honorable member to the very last caucus we had—an accidental caucus, if I may term it so—when the honorable member for Port Chalmers met ten or fourteen of us in the passage, and said we had better have a meeting to see what amendment should be proposed to measures that the Government were bringing down. We went into one of the rooms, and the honorable member for Port Chalmers produced a very mild amendment—so mild that some of us expressed our doubts as to whether it was sufficiently strong to be looked upon as a motion of want of confidence. The question was then asked as to where the honorable member for Waitemata was. He was sent for, and, having arrived, did not only coincide with the honorable member for Port Chalmers, but suggested that the only course for us to follow was to stop supplies; and, acting upon the advice of the honorable member for Waitemata, we resolved to stop supplies: yet this gentleman now comes before the House and shows how dexterously he can turn a political somersault. The only excuse that honorable member has is, that accounts shall be made up for the Auckland District, and that that district shall receive a fair share of public money in the future. That may be a good excuse so far as Auckland is concerned, but not to members of other districts, who will be inclined to say, "Let us start fair. Let us have the accounts squared, not with Auckland alone, but with Otago, with the west coast of the Middle Island, and with Nelson;" and I issue this as a warning to the members of those districts. If Auckland is the only province that is to have its accounts squared, it is time we looked to our own districts. I cannot help saying that I am very much grieved at the conduct of the honorable member for Waitemata. I thought that I should be able to follow those leading men of whom the honorable member for Waitemata is one. But I am sorry that such a bad example should be set by that honorable gentleman. The honorable member for Waitemata stands up and says he is not the least ashamed of it. I am ashamed of it. I, for one, say so; and I think many honorable members will

be ashamed of it, and will express their shame this very evening. I could not but help remarking the position the honorable member for Newton took during the whole speech of the honorable member for Waitemata. He sat there with his head in his hands all the time. The honorable member for Auckland City West, even, blushed during the whole of its delivery. After what I have experienced in the meetings of our party, I do not know language strong enough to describe the conduct of the honorable member for Waitemata. I will just conclude by saying that I trust before the motion of want of confidence is taken I shall find, from the Otago Province—from every province, in fact—as many openly return to our ranks as have now covertly deserted them.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I should like to say one or two words with regard to the statement which has been made by the honorable member for Waitemata. I do so more in sorrow than in anger. I cannot conceive why private conversations between us on these benches have been brought up in this House in the manner they have been by that honorable gentleman. If all the gossip which passes between friends after dinner, in confidence, is to be repeated here, and Hansardized, I do not know what will be the end of it. I confess I shall be very chary of opening my mouth, lest every word might be repeated in this House and Hansardized. My honorable friend stated nothing but the truth; but he did not state the whole truth. From what the honorable member for Waitemata said, it might appear that I arrogated to myself the function or privilege of nominating the future Premier. Such a thing, Sir, never entered my head. What took place was this: Sitting on this bench one evening after dinner, the conversation between the honorable member for Waitemata and myself turned in the direction of the possibilities of the future. I think it was said, "Supposing the Ministry were to resign, what then? Whom will the Governor send for?" "Well, I do not know for whom he will send—I know he will not send for me." The honorable member for Waitemata said, "You must be Premier." "Oh, no," said I; "you must be Premier. You are better qualified for the position than I am; unfortunately I have not got the qualifications of eloquence and ready speaking that you have, and, however fit I might be to administer the affairs of the colony, I could not claim the same power of speech that you have;" and therefore I admitted, and admit now, that of the two men the honorable member for Waitemata is far better fitted to take the leadership of the House than I should be. I thought my honorable friend was looking at the matter a little seriously, and I said, "We had better catch our hare first before we cook it. We shall have to consult our friends in the party; their pulse will have to be felt;" and I think I went on to say the proudest thing I could do would be to form a Ministry of which I myself should not be a member, inasmuch as I said that from my inability as a speaker I did not wish to place myself in a false position. Why all that

should be dragged up here to-night, and with what object, I cannot conceive. There was certainly nothing to warrant the honorable member for Waitemata in the action he has taken. I think, too, I added that I was prepared to do anything for the good of the party, and if I was asked to command the Channel fleet, and it was for the good of the party, I should consent to do so. I can assure you, Sir, that I never arrogated to myself the right or the privilege of nominating any one for this, that, or the other position. I stated, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Whenever the Government goes out, and we are called upon to form a Ministry, no doubt we can form a very strong one." And I have no doubt that had it been our lot to form a Ministry—as it may yet be, notwithstanding the defection of the honorable member for Waitemata—we should have formed a very strong one. I do not know that I need say anything further. I think the honorable member for Waitemata explained a little time ago that the leader of the party had deserted him. I should like to know wherein I have deserted him. I am not aware of it. I hold a very moderate opinion of my own abilities, and certainly I never expected that the honorable member for Waitemata could stand up and state what he did this afternoon.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman who has just sat down has asked why essentially private conversations between honorable members should be repeated here, and Hansardized. The reason is, there has been an attempt by the honorable member for the Thames to bring before the House conversations of an essentially private nature. Some honorable gentlemen want to have private conversations on the one side brought up, but object to private conversations on the other side being disclosed. That, Sir, is exactly the case. I do not know that I should have risen now, had it not been for the honorable member for the Thames alluding to gentlemen rushing across the floor of the House. The honorable member for the Thames said he was followed, and would be followed, by a large number of honorable members. It is quite clear from this remark that the honorable member for the Thames is to be leader of the Opposition party. It is quite clear, whoever may be the nominal leader—the honorable member for Port Chalmers, the honorable member for Akaroa, or the honorable member for Waitemata—the leader they will have to follow will be the honorable member for the Thames. That was a very instructive remark. It is perfectly true that, although at the first division I did give my voice for the Ayes, I have since had time for reflection, and reflection satisfies me we had better carry the motion. Honorable members on the opposite side of the House have been told there is no correspondence, and I am bound to say they did then look exceedingly foolish. However, I am very glad that the substance of what took place has been stated by the honorable member for Waitemata. What does it amount to? That the honorable member refused the Premiership from one leader of the party, and afterwards from another leader of the party.

Mr. Macandrew

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. HALL.—Well, honorable gentlemen differ upon the subject. According to the statement of the honorable member for Waitemata, that is so.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Treasurership.

Mr. HALL.—The Treasurership from the honorable member for the Thames, and the Premiership from the honorable member for Port Chalmers. Therefore, Sir, it cannot be said that the honorable member for Waitemata was influenced by selfish and personal considerations. We have nothing to offer him that would place him in a higher position than Treasurer or Premier—nothing superior to that which it appears he was to be. The honorable member for Waitemata states—and, I think, with that clearness and logic for which the honorable member for the Thames has given him credit—that circumstances had entirely altered since the elections; that things had come to a deadlock; that, unless some concession was made, the country would be placed in a very difficult and dangerous position; that in these circumstances he had to consider what it was his duty to the country to do, and that he allowed his duty to the colony at large to outweigh the considerations of party. The honorable gentleman has stated very truly that really there are not two parties in the House; there are two sets of men who might more properly be described each as the personal following under a separate leader. No one values more highly than I do the loyal feeling which binds men together as members of what they believe to be a party. It is a virtue; but if that feeling is carried so far as to lead men to sacrifice the interests of the country to party considerations, then that virtue becomes a vice. It is at any time an unjustifiable thing to do, to give up to the interests of party what is "meant for mankind." My honorable friend the member for Waitemata has risen superior to that feeling. He said very truly and feelingly that he knew well the amount of abuse he was bringing on his head, but that he was perfectly willing to suffer it in order that he might open this deadlock from which the country was suffering. That was the object of my honorable friend in coming to this side of the House. Reference was made to the question of education, and the condition imposed with regard to it by the honorable member for Waitemata. I suppose I am responsible for the condition referred to, because it is well known that I hold certain views upon the subject of religious teaching in Government schools. It is not true, as has been represented, that I wish in any way to disturb the present Education Act. I value that Act very highly; but I hold that some concessions are desirable for that large class of our fellow-subjects who are conscientiously unable to avail themselves of the Act as it now stands; and I would refuse to enter any Ministry unless I were able, when opportunity offered, to give effect to my own conscientious convictions upon that subject. The honorable member for Waitemata stipulated that the Education Act was not to be interfered with, but agreed that, if opportunity should arise, I should

be at liberty to give my vote according to my conscientious convictions. As to the Liberal Reform Bills, I cannot say that I felt very much flattered at the honorable member asking if it really was our intention to proceed with those measures. That, Sir, was what we meant to do all along. With regard to the third stipulation, as to what is due to Auckland. The honorable member for Waitemata contended that, in proportion to its contributions to the revenue, justice had not been done to Auckland; that the facts of the case should be ascertained; and that any injustice done in times past should be remedied. We not only agree to that in the case of Auckland, but we agree that it should be done in the case of other parts of the colony. I do not know how the account will come out; but, as to any such statement having ever been suggested as that £500,000 should be paid to Auckland, all I can say is, that there never was anything of the kind. It is perfectly absurd. The House has heard from the honorable member for Waitemata that there is no correspondence; but I go further, and I say that, while the House has no doubt a right to ask for all official correspondence, it has no right to ask for private correspondence which has passed between gentlemen, any more than it has to ask for private conversations. Therefore, if there had been any correspondence, I should, with the greatest possible respect to this House, have most firmly and absolutely declined to produce it. I take my stand upon the fact that the House has no more right to ask for private letters which have passed between gentlemen on political subjects than it has to ask for their pocket-books. I will not insult the House so much as to suppose that it asks for anything like private correspondence: but I do not think the occasion ought to pass without the assertion of my belief that the House has no right to ask anything from me but official correspondence.

Mr. MOSS.—I feel, Sir, as an Auckland member, the greatest possible pain in approaching the subject which is now before the House. I feel at the same time that I should not be doing my duty to myself or to the province if I did not stand up here to repudiate in the strongest possible language the transaction which we are now considering. I care not who did it or who is concerned in it. I feel that the honor of the province is at stake, and that we—the members who have not lent themselves to this proceeding—are to-night in a false position, and it is for us, if we would defend ourselves, to stand up and speak out exactly what we think, let who may be offended at the utterances. I do not wish to be measly-mouthed about it. I do not wish to consider whether this gentleman's support is to be retained, or the other gentleman to be coaxed or cajoled back again. I stand here to speak to-night what I believe will be the opinion of every man who comes from Auckland and who feels that the honor of the province is worth something more than mere lucre. Let me first take notice of what fell from the Premier, who I think is not worthily fulfilling the high office which he holds when he attempts to delude

us, the younger members of this House, into the belief that a public correspondence passing between four members, stating the conditions on which they are willing to sell themselves and sell their constituents, is to be mentioned in the same breath with confidential conversation between two members. Why, they are not at all on the same footing; and the Premier is lowering himself and lowering the high position which he now occupies when he attempts to lead us into such a belief. What does the Premier say? He says that there is a correspondence—he admits it—but he distinctly says he will not produce it.

Mr. HALL.—I said that, if there was any such correspondence, I would not produce it.

Mr. MOSS.—Well, if it had occurred anywhere else but in this House, I should call that an evasion. Now, let us see what is the next step. I say there is absolute truth in the statement made in this House, that the honorable member for Waitemata authorized that telegram to go last night to Auckland, stating that he and three other members had obtained, or would probably obtain, £500,000 for the Province of Auckland.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I rise to a point of order. The honorable member for Waitemata has distinctly denied in this House that he did authorize the telegram; and I ask you, Sir—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the objection should come from the honorable member for Waitemata himself.

Mr. READER WOOD.—I do deny having authorized any telegram to be sent in such terms; and I informed the honorable member for Parnell to-day, at the meeting of Auckland members, that I denied it, and had never authorized it, and he said, "I am glad to hear you say so." If I may be permitted, I will tell the story about the telegram. Perhaps I ought to begin by telling also what I had for breakfast this morning.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot allow the honorable member to make a speech. He has contradicted the statement made by the honorable member for Parnell, who is now entitled to proceed with his remarks.

Mr. MOSS.—I should be sorry to interfere with the honorable gentleman's explanation.

Mr. READER WOOD.—Then I will say this: The day before yesterday I received a note, when I was sitting here, from Mr. Montrose, which was—I have unfortunately torn it up—as nearly as possible as follows:—"I understand that you, and Swanson, and Hurst, and Colbeck have gone over to the Government. Is it true?" I knew he was a telegraphist. I did not write any reply, but I went out and saw him in the lobby, and I said to him, "I have got your note. The statement is not true that we have gone over to the Government; but what we have done is this: We have put our heads together to see if anything can be done with reference to extricating the House from this deadlock, and I think it is possible we may succeed. There are some arrangements going on with the Government as to something like terms." And I mentioned the terms—first about the liberal measures, second about education, and the third, I said, was this: that there would be an account struck between the different

parts of the colony and Auckland as to the amount of money that had been expended, and that then we should see whether there was any balance due to Auckland. Then I stopped, and I said, "There may be a balance, and it may amount to £500,000." But, Sir, not one single word was ever said to him about telegraphing it, and I never authorized it.

Mr. MOSS.—I accept the honorable gentleman's explanation, and I do say the honorable gentleman owes it to himself—he owes it to the other Auckland members—at once to repudiate the telegram which the Auckland people are to-day believing comes from him, and with his authority. Enough, Sir, about that. Until roused to something like a feeling of intense disgust yesterday by what I had heard rumoured in the lobbies, I have taken very little part in the politics of the last few weeks. I have attended caucuses, given my vote, and endeavoured to adhere faithfully to what was agreed upon, but know nothing of what has been going on beyond this, and come here ready to follow those whom we have deliberately selected as leaders. I was suggested at a caucus as one of a council to whom our party was prepared to intrust the management of its affairs, but asked that I might be excused from attending that council. One of the reasons that influenced me was this: I thought that Auckland was sufficiently represented on that council by the honorable member for Waitemata. I thought that we were safe in his hands; and he sat there on that council representing us. Imagine my surprise and sorrow when I heard yesterday that he—absolutely one of our executive committee—one to whom we had intrusted our interests as a party—was deliberately and in an underhand manner—I ought not to say "underhand"—in a secret manner negotiating with the Government at the same time. Sir, what language can characterize conduct like that! What language could be used in this House which would characterize such conduct, or would fittingly characterize it outside! I listened to what the honorable member said—to what he called his explanation—and what is the position which he assumed? One of the greatest arrogance and presumption, so far as we, the other Auckland members, are concerned. There are twelve of us, forsooth, who have not a thought among us—twelve of us careless of the welfare of the province—twelve of us who are regardless of its interests and its honor: and it was reserved for him suddenly to discover that carelessness; it was reserved for him to open negotiations to save the province from the calamity of being represented by twelve such colleagues as he had; and it was reserved for him, Sir, to negotiate with the Government to secure justice to the province! Why, does he suppose that we are not all ready to see justice done to the province, if necessary? Had he any reason to suppose that injustice was contemplated, or that we should not get fair-play? Had he any reason to suppose that it was necessary for us to crawl to the Government on those benches, and say, "If you will give us justice, we will keep you there;" and for them to reply, "Yes; you

shall have justice, but only on condition that you come here and vote with us, be your conscientious opinions what they may"? That would certainly be in keeping with the whole proceedings of the Government. What have they told us about these Bills, upon which so many of us have set our hearts? "You shall have these Bills—you shall have your extension of the franchise, you shall have your triennial Parliaments, you shall have what you call parliamentary reforms; but only on one condition—that you vote for us." Is that a proper attitude for the Government of a free country? Is it the attitude in which we ought to approach the Government? It is well known to all honorable members that telegrams have been flying from Auckland—there has been a perfect shower of them. I had a telegram myself from some of my constituents, urging me to this very course; and I say the wires are pulled at Wellington. There is one now in Wellington who well knows how to pull those wires. Well, these telegrams have come to me as well as to others, and my unhesitating reply was that, if we would see justice done to Auckland, we must act in such a way as to preserve the respect of those other members of the House by whom we had been so loyally and cordially supported. And I am proud and happy to say that since sending that telegram I have received replies stating, "We heartily agree with what you have told us, and approve thoroughly of what you are doing." The honorable member for Waitemata tells us, too, with an air of martyrdom, that he knows the abuse he is going to bring upon his head. He knows it well, Sir, and it is his conscience that tells him of it. He is meeting it halfway. The honorable gentleman may smile, but under that smile there must be a very sore heart at this moment, if a heart there be. I have heard nothing said to vindicate the course which those four honorable members have thought fit to pursue.

Some tricks, some quillots, how to cheat the devil;
Some salve for perjury:

That, Sir, is the style in which any honorable gentlemen who should attempt to defend such a course must speak. I dare not trust myself to say half of what I feel on this occasion; but I say this: that, so far as the honorable member for Waitemata is concerned, he may go; so far as the honorable member for Marsden is concerned, I shall be sorry to see him go, but he is a young member, and they have taken him in; so far as my pachydermatous friend the honorable member for Auckland City West is concerned, I shall say Good-bye to him without regret: but when I see included with these three the name of the honorable member for Newton, then I say we are losing a representative man from Auckland, and I am sure that every one of us will feel more regret at finding his name mixed up with such a transaction than we should on account of twenty others. I am sure that whatever the honorable gentleman has done he has done sincerely, believing that he was acting for the good of the province: but I and others believe that he has been misled. He has not many soft spots, but one of them has been found out. The

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whole tendency of this proceeding is to lower the Province of Auckland to the position it occupied three or four years ago, before the honorable member for the Thames lifted it out of the mire. Less than two years ago I heard the Province of Auckland derided in this House—characterized as a beggar, as one of the most mean and selfish of provinces, as a place without honor, as a place ever ready to sell itself and its members for a little filthy lucre; and it is against that the honorable member for the Thames has been striving for the last two years. He has endeavoured to make the province respected: that is the true point. We felt that he was raising high the flag of the province—putting it in such a position that we could come here and ask boldly for what was due to us, and no more. And now, Sir, what has happened? It is sold again. The honorable member for Waitemata seems to be in the most perfect bliss. He laughs and enjoys the idea. History has repeated itself. I am told that in 1863 he declared in this House that coalition was a most wicked thing, that he denounced the Government with all the eloquence with which he is endowed, and was sworn in as a member of the same Government the same day. On two other occasions we have seen the same thing, and I believe we shall again see Auckland represented by him on the Government benches.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Agent-Generalship.

Mr. MOSS.—I shall not detain the House any longer. I believe that in what I have said I have given expression to the opinions of many other Auckland members who feel that to-night has been undone a great deal of the good work which the honorable member for the Thames has been devoting himself to for the last three or four years. We who are left must still act firmly together, and show to those gentlemen who have trusted us in the past, and who I hope will trust us a little longer, that the Auckland Province has still a sense of loyalty and honor among those who represent it.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—After what has transpired in the House to-day I can never sufficiently thank Providence that I have never been considered of sufficient importance to be admitted behind the scenes of New Zealand politics. I cannot but feel that, had it been my lot to know as much about public affairs as some honorable gentlemen, I should long since have lost that bloom of youthful innocence which I hope I still possess. Sir, there has been a great deal of superfluous pain, and sorrow, and astonishment knocking about in this House to-night. I never heard such sad speeches before. Every honorable gentleman seems to feel the deepest pain and regret, approaching even to suffering, but not one of them has yet shown why he should get into such a grievous state. It would have been very much better if some of those honorable gentlemen had left the subject alone, if they could only approach it in the manner in which they have approached it. Why, Sir, what has happened on this occasion? Parties have been on the balance for a whole month, sometimes one party being in the ascendant, and sometimes the other, the predominance hanging on the vote of a single

honorable member who could not make up his mind, and consequently has been very unhappy, the whole country crying out meanwhile against the waste of time. At this critical period in the history of the country four gentlemen for whom everybody in the House has the greatest respect decide that they will take a course for themselves with a view to put an end to this deadlock; and they decide to take this course not upon any personal ground whatever. No personal motives have been attributed to them, even by those reckless and unscrupulous speakers who have denounced them in this House to-night. They have gone on public grounds for what they have done. The terms upon which they have decided to support the Government are connected with large public questions. Not one private, personal, or even local matter has been brought into the discussion of the terms. I may say that I was not at all in the confidence of the Government in this matter, or of any section of the House. My knowledge of it is derived entirely from what I have heard in open debate in this House, and I am perfectly satisfied from what I have heard that those honorable gentlemen have done what they have done without justly incurring any of the blame which these disappointed and angry partisans attach to them. We are told by the honorable member for the Thames that the first charge he has to make against those four honorable gentlemen is, that they had joined themselves to a party of gentlemen who agreed that upon no terms whatever should there be coalition. If they did so, I think they did a very foolish and unpatriotic thing, and the sooner they got into a better state of mind and determined to throw aside such an absurd pledge, the better it was for themselves and for the country. What did he expect this party of gentlemen to do? Was it his desire that they should keep the public affairs of this colony in a state of stagnation for the rest of the year, that the public business should be thrown into a state of confusion, and that nothing but political excitement of the worst possible description should prevail for an indefinite period? Was it his desire to throw parties in this House, and the public affairs, into such a state of disorder that there should be no outcome but a resumption of power by himself? Was that his object? No doubt it was; and it is a good thing for the colony that there were some honorable gentlemen who declined to be dragged at his chariot-wheels, as he himself expressed it. If that is all that can be brought against the honorable member for Waitemata and the other honorable gentlemen, they have very little indeed on their conscience. The honorable member for Waitemata has been charged with having betrayed the secrets of the honorable member for Port Chalmers and his party. Under what circumstances did he do so? After the honorable member for the Thames had demanded the production of the correspondence that had passed between the Government and certain honorable gentlemen who were in their confidence. He did so after the honorable member for Mount Ida had denounced him in violent terms and held him up to public scorn and reprobation; he did so after

he had been challenged in abusive epithets; he did so in self-defence: and I am bound to say that the disclosure he made in answer to that challenge was one of the most interesting disclosures ever made. Did I not say what would be likely to happen if we were to put the leadership of the Opposition into commission? I said that this House would be a perfect pandemonium, and so it would have been. The honorable gentleman said that if they had waited till the want-of-confidence motion had been decided, and then gone over, they would not have been to blame; but what he did blame them for was that they went over before the want-of-confidence motion was brought to an issue. Exactly. Now, let the House consider what that means. If the want-of-confidence motion had been carried in the state in which they were, what would have occurred? If those gentlemen could have torn themselves away from the quarrels for office, a Ministry would have been formed. Immediately afterwards there would have been a defection, and a new dead-lock would have been the result. And where would the country be during all this time? Where would the finances be? Where would these precious liberal measures be? We should have seen a perfect pandemonium; and in the meantime the work of the session would have been brought to a standstill. Those gentlemen acted wisely, they acted with due regard to their own self-respect, they acted in the interests of the colony, in making up their minds to go over before the want-of-confidence vote came on—before the actual cataclysm had occurred—rather than bring the House into a state of confusion. They have taken what those gentlemen who have denounced them know to be the right step; and they would have taken an exceedingly wrong step, which nobody could have justified, if they had waited for the want-of-confidence motion to come on, and then had changed sides and brought about the same state of confusion in which we have been for the last four weeks. Sir, the honorable member for Waitemata, in stating—quite justifiably, as I hold—every particular of what had occurred in these negotiations, was compelled in honor to tell both sides of the story; and it was no breach of confidence, after what had occurred, for him to come down here and tell the House the very words of the conversation that had taken place between himself and the honorable member for the Thames, and between himself and the honorable member for Port Chalmers, with reference to the proposed Ministerial arrangements. That threw a flood of light upon the whole subject, and now we really know the state of the case. It appears to be this: There were four leaders of the Opposition, each looking to be Premier of the colony, and each looked up to by a section of the party as being the man to be Premier of the colony in case a new Ministry was formed.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Well, Sir, the honorable member for Hokitika was probably not in their confidence. They use him as gigantic bellows, to blow up the fire; but apparently they do not let him warm himself at their hearth. The

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honorable member for the Thames was one of those who were put up to be the future Premier. He was put up, no doubt, by a large section.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Well, as I said just now, the honorable gentleman knew nothing about it. But am I to be told that the honorable members from Auckland who still adhere to the honorable member for the Thames do not look to his again taking the lead of public affairs?

Mr. SEDDON.—I tell you they did not.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I am obliged to the honorable member for the interruption; but I tell him that I am quite satisfied the honorable member for the Thames would have come to the head of affairs if the motion of the honorable member for Port Chalmers had been carried. And I should have earnestly desired it, because I prefer to have a real leader, one who has the faculty to lead his fellow-men, one who is the natural leader of that party so long as it exists. It is nonsense to tell me that any other honorable member of that party can pretend to lead it. But there are other ambitious men in this House besides the honorable member for Waitemata. I believe the honorable member for Port Chalmers did offer that honorable gentleman the lead, and there were many other members of the party who wished to see him in that position, and would willingly have come into the arrangement. Therefore the honorable member for Waitemata was also to be Premier. That has come out quite clearly. Then, of course, there was the honorable member for Port Chalmers, whom a large section of the party wished to see Premier. And then there is my honorable friend the member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance). He also was to be Premier. There was certainly a section of the party which wanted him to be Premier, and to put the honorable member for Waitemata in the Cabinet with him. Then there is an honorable gentleman who does not hold a seat in this House, but who held a prominent portfolio in the late Ministry: there was a large section which looked to him as the future Premier. He was to do the department in another place, and they were to do the humdrum work here. So that there were at least five Premiers. Then there were to be three Treasurers. My honorable friend the member for Waitemata was one, my honorable friend the member for Wanganui (Mr. Ballance) was another, and I believe the claims of my honorable friend the member for Akaroa could not possibly have been overlooked. Where was Canterbury to be? Surely it was not to be shut out in the cold, and certainly the honorable gentleman's claims to office in a Ministry formed from that party are greater than those of any other member from that part of the colony. He must have been Colonial Treasurer—unless, indeed, he was to take the Public Works, when no doubt he would have at once set to work to make the Akaroa Railway. Then, as to Attorney-Generals, the number of Attorney-Generals that were to be in this new Ministry is something astonishing. Sir, there was a time in the history of this Assembly when it was considered only right and reasonable that a gentle-

man should have considerable experience in politics and should have studied something at least of parliamentary law before he could aspire to the post of Attorney-General. But we live in an age of change. This is a great young nation, and great liberal principles prevail in it, and all that kind of thing is done away with; and all that is necessary now to qualify an honorable gentleman for the office of Attorney-General is, that he shall be elected to Parliament, and that he shall vote straight with his party. But I forget—it is also necessary that he shall not vote with his party, but shall vote with the other side on particular occasions; and then he has a still greater claim. So we have the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart). Is it possible that he could have been overlooked when filling the post of Attorney-General? Certainly not. He was bound to be Attorney-General if there was any dependence to be placed in the statements of those honorable gentlemen. Then we have my honorable friend the member for Waitaki (Mr. Hislop). Could he be overlooked? Why, he is the Attorney-General of the party already. On every possible occasion he comes down and gives us law of the most refined possible description. He had a claim that they could not in honor and safety overlook. Then I am told that the honorable member for Buller was also looked upon as a rising young lawyer, and that he would do credit to the party as Attorney-General. I quite agree that he would have made an admirable Attorney-General. And there are others. There is my honorable friend the member for Wakatipu, who could not very well be overlooked if we consider the great ability he has recently displayed when any legal question has been raised in the House. And so we could run through all the posts until we must come to the conclusion that the only possible way in which those honorable gentlemen could form a Ministry that would have the confidence of the party at all would be to increase the number of Ministers to forty-five. That would give them an absolute majority. They would form a strong Ministry, unless one of those unfortunate occasions should arise of a split in the Cabinet; because then, if the honorable member for the Thames were at the head, we might have a recurrence of the same system that has already been resorted to, of calling messengers into requisition to reduce the number of the Cabinet. That is the state of things, and it is no doubt due to the fact that the leaders of the party do not communicate with each other as to the arrangements they make, and do not consult the various sections as to what shall be done. The consequence is, that we find totally different versions of the intentions of the Opposition given by the different leaders. I ask the House, is it reasonable to suppose that such a party could hold together long? I say it is perfectly wonderful they held together so long as they have done, and I am quite certain that nothing but the feeling that they were a party, and that honorable gentlemen of that party should pause for a long time before doing anything to break it up, could have held them together so long. That, I believe, was the feeling which actuated the honorable

gentlemen who have now left it. As was stated by the honorable member for Waitemata, I believe those honorable gentlemen sincerely felt that the interests of the country were suffering by their sticking any longer to a party that could not govern this country or rule this House. I believe it was because they would not allow party considerations to override all others that they were led to act as they did; and, instead of any odium or discredit attaching to them, the greatest credit is due to them for their conduct. It is not as if they sneaked over one by one, each making his own terms with the Government, and acting entirely on his own account. They did nothing of the kind. They did what they did in the light of day, and on purely public grounds. The honorable member for the Thames complains that they did not give him due notice of their defection from his party. I believe, the very first moment when they were really in a position to do so, they did give notice to their party. The honorable gentleman, in a tone of great indignation, says that such a thing has never before been known in this country. Why, Sir, I remember, and many other honorable members of this House remember, the occasion when Mr. George Parker, the then member for Gladstone, one of the most honorable and upright gentlemen in the colony—a man against whose character no one dare utter a word, a man who never gained anything from his connection with public affairs, but on the contrary was a loser by it—I remember an occasion when he and other gentlemen as honorable as himself did precisely the same as these honorable gentlemen have done on the present occasion. Finding that the state of parties was such that business was at a deadlock, that nothing could be done, and that the interests of the country were suffering, those honorable gentlemen determined to go over and make a strong Government out of the party with which up to that time they had not been acting; and nobody blamed them except a few who were excited and angry, as some honorable gentlemen appear to be to-night. We have had a great deal of talk about corruption, and terms, and buying, and bribery, and all that sort of thing; but there is nothing in it. Millions were supposed to be knocking about, and some honorable members appeared to think that it was monstrous that such large sums of money should be thrown away to gain a few votes. It was the waste that affected them. But there was nothing of the kind. No terms were made but such as men of the highest honor and self-respect could agree to act together upon. The honorable member for the Thames certainly amused me in what he said in regard to one of these honorable gentlemen. Referring to the honorable member for Mareden, he acquitted that honorable gentleman of going over suddenly, and said he would always remember with great pleasure the manner in which the honorable gentleman came to him and explained that he was about to leave the party. What struck me was the expression he used. He called himself the person to whom the honorable gentleman was engaged. "Was engaged!" That is the expression. That is the way in which the suffrages of the free and enlightened electors

of the Auckland Provincial District are made use of. That is the way in which the members they send to Parliament are treated. They are "engaged" to the honorable member for the Thames. But I believe the honorable member for Marsden would have got in if he had had no connection with the honorable member for the Thames, and, indeed, would have got in much more easily. Then the honorable member for the Thames considers he was "engaged" to him just as if he were a footman or a cab-driver, engaged for a certain time. He said the honorable gentleman came and told him he had fulfilled his agreement—that is, he was out of the honorable gentleman's service, and was about to seek employment in another;—and the honorable gentleman dismissed him with a good character. I say that is a shameful thing for the honorable member to say. And the honorable gentleman said it advisedly. He holds his followers as lackeys. That it is so is plain, because when those gentlemen were going to election they had their cabs placarded with "Vote for So-and-so, the man whom Grey approves of." We know now what this Auckland block vote is. I am glad that it is broken up, and that some of those honorable gentlemen have had the courage and independence of character to shake themselves free from a bondage that must have been intolerable to them. Then the honorable gentleman told us that when the division-bell rang we all rushed over into the lobby to vote for his amendment to the motion for going into Committee of Supply, in order to prevent a defeat. Why, Sir, there is nothing more common in this House. He said such a scene had never been witnessed in the world before. I cannot speak for other places, but I know that in this House it has been witnessed hundreds of times. Only last session, when a division was taken on the motion of the late Minister for Public Works (Mr. Macandrew) for the establishment of a steam service to England, some of his own party came over and voted on the other side to prevent its being made a Ministerial question, and the Ministerial papers next day declared it was not to be taken as a vote against the Government, because Mr. Sheehan and others voted against the motion. The honorable gentleman must have forgotten that occasion, or he must be dreaming, if he thinks that it is not one of the most common pieces of Parliamentary tactics, and nothing to be ashamed of either. I voted as I did this afternoon because I wanted to have this correspondence produced. I do not know that there is any; but, after what had been said in the House about the conduct of the honorable member for Waitemata, I thought if any correspondence existed it ought to be produced, for the honorable gentleman's own benefit and for the benefit of others who had been charged with entering into a dishonorable arrangement with the Government. I thought they were entitled to have these papers produced, and on that ground I voted for the production of them. There was nothing new in what took place on that division, and certainly nothing of a scene as the honorable gentleman described it. It was merely an ordinary parliamentary proceed-

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ing which gave the honorable member for the Thames so much joy and solace for the pain and suffering he had undergone at finding that his power was at last shaken at its foundation. He said his confidence in human nature has been shaken, and that he cannot trust his fellow-men. I believe the honorable member for Auckland City West also gave the honorable gentleman full notice a week ago that he intended to leave him. He told the honorable gentleman in plain terms, when showing him some correspondence on a particular subject, that he considered himself entirely free. I think it is abundantly evident to every member of this House that the change of parties which has now taken place is such a change as has been anticipated for weeks. The fact was this: The Opposition hoped that some members would go over from our side, and we hoped that some members would come over from their side. Sooner or later it was bound to come about, and from the beginning I should not have attached the slightest blame to any honorable gentlemen who might come over on purely public grounds, after giving a fair understanding to the House of the position which they meant to take up. And what do we find? The honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Reid) denounced the honorable member for Waitemata in the most violent terms. He could not express his holy horror of what the honorable member had done. He said that he came up here, as a young member, hoping to respect the honorable gentleman, but that now he felt the deepest contempt for him, and that anything more shocking he had never seen. I thought that very ridiculous; but what amused me most was that after this he ended his speech by saying, "In conclusion, I wish to say that I hope and confidently expect to see six Otago members and other members come over from the Government side to the Opposition in the course of a few days." That is logic; that is argument. It is the unpardonable sin on the part of those honorable gentlemen, although they are perfectly satisfied in their own consciences that they are only carrying out the behests of their constituents—it is the unpardonable sin for them to come over to the Government; but it will be an act of the highest possible virtue if six members from Otago or any other district go from the Government benches and turn the scales once more. That is quite enough to settle the whole thing. One of the strongest speakers on that side admits the hope that he will see six members from our side go over; and I suppose on that occasion he will not get up and speak with contempt and horror. When that occurs I hope that the honorable member for the Thames's confidence in human nature will be restored, and that once more he will feel trust in his fellow-men. The honorable gentlemen on the other side say they do not so much mind the honorable member for Waitemata going over; and that they forgive the honorable member for Marsden because he is young and foolish. With regard to the honorable member for Auckland City West, they regret it; but, still, they would let him go. But the honorable member for Newton breaks their heart. It is the last straw when

that honorable gentleman leaves them, and they say it will ruin the Auckland block vote. I hope it will. I say that we welcome that honorable gentleman to this side of the House—we would welcome him to any party he chooses to join, because he is an invaluable member of Parliament, and because every member of the House knows that whatever he does is done from conscientious motives, and after most mature consideration. I do not wonder they regret him. I always looked for him to come, because I was sure he had too much common-sense to bind himself to a block vote for any man, or to act simply from blind partisanship, without the slightest regard for the public interest or the progress of parliamentary business. I do not often answer the honorable member for Parnell. I generally let him alone entirely. He bores me, and I dare say I bore him. At any rate, he bores me, and I generally pay him the doubtful compliment of leaving the House when he speaks. To-night I listened to him, and he took one line which, I am bound to say, was very reprehensible. He told us that it was only since the honorable member for the Thames appeared on the political scene that Auckland had risen from the mire. He spoke of past times, when Auckland was a by-word, was looked upon as the beggar of the colony, and was regarded with scorn. Now, I tell him that among the members for Auckland were some of the best men in the House in days gone by. Some of the ablest politicians and best men who ever came to the House came here from Auckland—much better men than he is; far better politicians than he is ever likely to be. I do not wish to say anything derogatory to the Auckland members, but I may say, without being hard upon them, that they are nothing like so good a phalanx as we have seen from that district. In former times we have seen gentlemen here each one of whom had weight in the public counsels of the colony, and who altogether formed a powerful body in this House, not because they had one big man at their head, but because each of them had in his own person a certain amount of talent and political influence. What is the strength of the boasted Auckland party now? That the honorable member for the Thames is their leader. In him they trust, and him they follow blindly. But not till death. I do not believe they will, because I believe they will betray him on the first possible occasion. But they said, "We will trust in him because during the general elections a party will be elected on his ticket; and we may gain some advantage if we stick together, and form a compact body in the House." I am very happy to say that this has not taken place. But this is not what I was referring to. I was referring particularly to the honorable gentleman's most unworthy remarks about those gentlemen who represented the Province of Auckland in the House in years past. John Williamson had more power in this House than the honorable member for the Thames ever had—power not based simply on the hope of what people could get from him, but on the unbounded confidence placed in him by his followers as an unselfish and most persistent politician. The Auckland mem-

bers worked thoroughly with their party, without any of that sham leadership which we have seen in the honorable member for the Thames. I say the honorable member for Parnell traduced the old members from Auckland. He seemed to me to be entirely ignorant of the past political history of that part of the country in which he lives. In my opinion, so far from raising Auckland from the mire, the honorable member for the Thames has done Auckland more harm a hundred times than good by trying to raise up a political block vote with which to threaten all other sections of the colony. Auckland will never get its rights, and will never get fair consideration in the politics of this country, until the members from that district take part in colonial affairs as colonists, and not merely as Auckland men. When they join with men from other parts of the colony for the general good of all the inhabitants of New Zealand they will be the powerful body they should be as representing a large and populous section of the colony. But a mere block vote, and the blind following of one leader, will never secure that position for them, for the simple reason that it raises antagonism among other members of the House. No one cares for Auckland more than I do; no one would more willingly serve the interests of that part of the colony; but I felt a positive revulsion from having anything to do with Auckland when I was told that Sir George Grey had a block vote of fifteen members from Auckland who would sweep everything before them. I heard one member say, "We have tasted blood now, and we mean to have enough before we are done." That sort of thing does not answer in this House. It will be much better for those honorable gentlemen to take the line of action now initiated by the honorable member for Waitemata and the honorable member for Newton, and join cordially with other honorable gentlemen who are honestly striving to serve the best interests of the colony, and do what they can from a purely colonial point of view. I have listened to the speeches to-night, and to the invitation of the honorable member for Parnell to other members to speak out their minds—not to care what they say, or what terms they use. But I am quite satisfied of this: that any honorable gentleman who chooses to take a quiet and impartial view of the political position will entirely exonerate those honorable gentlemen from any blame; and I am quite satisfied that when this struggle is over, and the politics of the country settle down again, those honorable gentlemen will receive the thanks of the inhabitants of New Zealand from one end to the other.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—The honorable member for Geraldine has been good enough to accuse me of making a violent speech this afternoon, and of calling the honorable member for Waitemata a traitor. Now, I did no such thing. I said most distinctly that I refused to believe those charges—that I would not believe them until they were proved by the division, or admitted by the honorable member himself. The honorable member has been good enough this afternoon to admit those charges; and now I can speak of him in

a different tone—I hope without using strong language, which the honorable member for Geraldine properly deprecates. I certainly shall not call the honorable member for Waitemata a traitor, whatever I may think. The honorable member for Geraldine has constituted himself to-night the person, I suppose, most specially fitted to give a definition of personal honor between gentlemen. Now, I altogether deny the honorable gentleman's right to put himself forward to give that definition, more particularly when that personal honor is mixed up with the actions of men as public men in this House. Such a definition must come from an honorable member who has not crossed the floor of this House three times within three years. It must come from an honorable member true to his party, who has not to get up time after time and say, "I was deluded by the honorable gentleman, Sir George Grey; I was deluded by that clever man, Sir William Fox;" and who, I think, was deluded by that clever man, William Mudie Larnach. The honorable gentleman is too often deluded. I think he is deluded to-night; and really I do not think his delusion will have much weight with this House. The real question to-night is, Is this action on the part of four honorable members right, or is it wrong? That is the question. It may be put in another way. Is it right to do an act in this House which it would be wrong to do in a club or private house? The honorable member for Geraldine would lead us to believe that an act of—it is difficult to speak to-night and find the right word to use about an act such as we are told has taken place—is quite right in this House, and is to be indorsed rather than blamed. I would ask that honorable member, if he was working with a party of friends in Timaru on some local question, and had agreed specifically on a certain line of action devised together, had determined upon that action, had pledged their words to one another in regard to that action, would it be right and honorable for him, before the time came for the action to culminate, to go behind the backs of his friends, unknown to them, and negotiate against that action? Let me say I believe he would not do it. He has been put up, or has put himself up generally, to make a defence for the action of his party, because I hold that the blame for the action that is contemplated now is not to be imputed so much to the four honorable members who are taking it as to the Government who proffered inducements, who confirmed the proffer, who sealed the compact, and who now come down and say, "Go on with your vote of no-confidence." On the eve of an election, if you were to offer an elector an inducement to vote for you, you would be guilty of bribery and be punished. Yet, on the eve of a no-confidence division, when the Government benches themselves are at stake, the Government think it not unworthy of them to negotiate with members who are voting against them—unknown to those members' party—to make offers to them, to accept their offers, to put it in writing, to seal it, and then come down and say it is the conduct

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of four honorable gentlemen. Sir, the honorable member for Waitemata is very candid. There is always a good deal behind what he chooses to tell us, and there is a good deal behind what he has chosen to tell us this afternoon. I, for my part, am not prepared to believe now that we know the whole of these terms. We know some of them. We know that one honorable member is to have a portfolio, and we know that the honorable member himself is to have his revenge. We do not know that the honorable member for Newton is to have anything. The honorable member for Waitemata is to have his revenge. He came to this House to oppose Sir George Grey. He never can forgive Sir George Grey for not giving him the Agent-Generalship. He went Home with the expectation of getting the Agent-Generalship, and has had to come back to the colony without getting it.

MR. READER WOOD.—The honorable member is entirely wrong.

MR. DE LAUTOUR.—Does the honorable gentleman deny that he expected to receive the Agent-Generalship?

MR. READER WOOD.—I do deny it.

MR. DE LAUTOUR.—Of course I have to accept his denial; but the word of an honorable member of this House who breaks his pledge and confidence with me is not very reliable. The honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. W. J. Hurst) is to have a portfolio. That is certain, we are told, although he has not got it yet, and I am not sure that he will get it. What I was more particularly going to say was this: The honorable member for Waitemata has told us that he came to this House to support Sir George Grey. Now, at the close of his speech this afternoon he scouted the idea of following the dictation of Sir George Grey, and said it would be better for Sir George Grey to be returned to this House with fourteen votes than that he should follow him through all his vagaries. The honorable gentleman is full of inconsistencies. He states that he was in favour of the honorable member for Port Chalmers being Premier, and yet he also tells us that he has gone over to the other side because Otago had a million of money under the honorable member's administration: that Auckland was now to have her share, and that Auckland would not have got her share from that honorable member if he was made Premier of the colony. I will say this, in regard to that matter—it has been pointed out already, but it can be made more specific still: It was agreed by the party—at the invitation of the honorable member for Waitemata, who tells us that he came to this House to support Sir George Grey—it was agreed by the party, on his invitation, that Sir George Grey should be deposed, and that the honorable member for Port Chalmers should reign in his stead. The honorable member tells us he was pledged to support him.

MR. READER WOOD.—The honorable member is misstating the facts entirely. Sir George Grey said he would retire from the leadership.

MR. DE LAUTOUR.—The honorable member for Waitemata moved that Mr. Macandrew should be leader of the party. I was doubtful, and had

some hesitation in agreeing to such a motion, coming from a leader of the Auckland party, who I thought was fighting in Sir George Grey's interest. I ventured to protest. I said I did not think it was a good thing; that, if it was to be justified, it could be justified only by expediency and by success; that it might possibly happen that, if the party was to meet with discomfiture, it might be necessary to fall back upon the honorable member the late Premier as the only possible rallying-point we had in the country in the cause of Liberalism. What said my honorable friend? He got up, somewhat indignantly, and said, "If it is understood that Mr. Macandrew shall not lead, the whole thing will drop. I insist upon Mr. Macandrew leading to the end of the session."

MR. READER WOOD.—I never used those words.

MR. DE LAUTOUR.—The honorable gentleman had his say this afternoon; I am going to have my say now. He undoubtedly moved that Mr. Macandrew should be leader: he insisted that he should continue leader whether we succeeded or whether we failed: in either case Mr. Macandrew was to be leader to the end of the session; he insisted upon it. I withdrew my objection, as I think now, foolishly, as I do believe that it was relaxing that claim upon the Auckland members, that bond which they were bound by, and which we in our folly thought would have been amply secured by the bond of personal honor to the party. In a few words I said, "You must remember the circumstances under which the elections in the North were carried out: it has been greatly a personal question, and this is a dangerous thing to do." I was overruled by the honorable member for Waitemata, who forced the honorable member for Port Chalmers into the position in which he stands now, simply to betray him, and for no other object whatever. If this was an honorable thing to do, if it was to be justified by his interest in the position of public business, would it not have been right to tell us of the arrangement? The first we heard of the matter from the honorable gentleman was this morning. We had heard rumours. I had notes sent to me yesterday asking me, Was it true that So-and-so and So-and-so had gone over? I wrote, at once, indignant replies, "No; there is no truth in it." This morning the honorable member for Waitemata came to us to say, "I shall not vote with you on the motion of want of confidence; I am going to vote with the Government; my position is irrevocable." If there was honor in such conduct, if the intention was true and right, if the interest of the country was really what was sought after, and what it was intended to protect, I say his party—with whom he acted for the last few weeks, whom the honorable member for Waitemata himself advised from day to day and from step to step, who appointed him to represent them—I say we should have been called together and told that the interests of the country demanded a different line of action on our part; that, "unless you, as a party, agree to give way and permit the business of the country to go on under a reasonable coalition, I must withdraw

from you as a party." That would have been a fair and honorable position to have taken up. The honorable member took up the opposite position. He worked in secret. He tells you all along that at least his vote is to be depended upon; and at the last moment, when the crisis has come, and it has been already arranged that to-day the motion of want of confidence is to be brought on, he then announces his defection. We are told that this is the conduct of honorable men. Is that right or is it wrong? Would the interests of the country have been jeopardized by our being told frankly and candidly that it was the intention of those honorable gentlemen to do what they have done? We are told that it is in the interest of Auckland. I say the people of Auckland do not require the sacrifice of personal honor at the hands of their representatives in order to confer pecuniary advantages upon that province. I deny altogether that the people of Auckland, who have cordially united with the people of Otago, who have felt that there has been a bond of sympathy between the extreme North and the extreme South which did not exist elsewhere—I deny that the people of that northern province will sanction an act of treachery based on the argument that the interests of the Provincial District of Auckland demanded the sacrifice of personal honor. That, of course, is a matter for the people of Auckland themselves. I say, speaking for the South, it is a bitter thing. In spite of the remarks of the honorable member for Geraldine, I say it is a sad thing. For years we have struggled together in good faith with the North. We agreed to give up interests which we cherished most dearly. We agreed to sacrifice our common fund, our Land Fund, our education reserves, so that it should not be said that the South was rich while poverty existed in the North. We have made these sacrifices. We have met Auckland fairly face to face. We trusted the representatives of Auckland. We were prepared to take advice from the leading members from Auckland—for instance, from the honorable member for Newton. To find out that those in whom we trusted—those who have acted with us during the last few weeks—have simply betrayed us is a sad thing, a pitiable thing, a thing that will be written in the history of this colony so indelibly that blood itself will not wipe it out. The honorable member for Kaipoi and the honorable member for Waitemata may say that there are no such things as party lines—that you may cross the floor of this House through personal belief in one man or disbelief in another. I take a different opinion. I say that responsible government cannot be carried on unless you have party lines, and unless, no matter what may constitute the division, these party lines are adhered to. If members on one side are to betray their party—accept terms from the other side and go over to it—if that is done, party government is impossible, and that means that responsible government is impossible. It is impossible that honorable members can really represent the people, because they have been sent here to represent the principles which are supposed to exist on one side or the other. If they

will ignore those principles for the sake of a paltry bribe or some advantage for their own particular district, it is nonsense to think the people can be represented under such circumstances. We must fix upon some other mode of government altogether. Whatever may have been the state of things when the public works policy first began—whatever may have been the difficulty of continuing parties which then arose—by the influence of a few leading men, conspicuous among whom has been Sir George Grey, and by their aid, we have got some development of party. We have one party, at any rate, who profess to be the party of Liberalism, which the country returned nearly the whole of this House to support. We are told now that there are to be no parties, although it must be known that on this side of the House alone honorable members have for years past adhered to all the most advanced liberal doctrines that have ever been prescribed in any civilized country. It is true that honorable gentlemen on the opposite side have professed their desire to bring down liberal measures; but can we have any faith in a party whose leader only last year denounced every point of the liberal policy, and who now comes and lays Bills before us and says, "Oh, I am a Liberal"? But that is a question of policy, which I do not wish to go into now. I simply rose in the interests of the party, being one of the subordinates of that party, to expose the treachery we have been subjected to. It is said we have not been betrayed: it is said that confidence has not been broken. I say we have been sold; I say four members of our party have made up their minds to sell us deliberately, and have kept it a secret from us, who had a first right to know. One of the four honorable gentlemen is the honorable member for Newton—and it is far from my intention to say one word which he might resent, or which might be taken to be meant unkindly, or which, coming from so young a man as myself, might be taken as being impertinent; but I wish to say this: that, from the time I first came into the House, he has shown me great kindness, he has given me advice. His honorable conduct has formed a standard upon which we might hope to mould our courses; and now, to crown all, he has given us, at the last moment—we are told in the interest of Auckland—an instance of how a party may be betrayed. I refuse, even now, to believe it of that honorable gentleman. We may regret that the honorable member for Auckland City West, being flattered with the offer of a seat in the Ministry, has given way to temptation; but when he is accompanied by the honorable member for Waitemata and the honorable member for Newton, who have held a high position in the political circle for many years, how can we blame him? What inducement is there for any one to be honest in the future? Why should we not all put our wares in the market and offer ourselves for sale? What man will be true to his principles? There is no inducement for a man to raise himself upon the political ladder. He may be ambitious, and in a moment of unsteadiness he may contemplate sacrificing personal honor to political advancement. In that

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moment of doubt a temptation steps in, the man takes his price—and this day some of them have got it. Can responsible government continue under such a system as that? We have Ministers sitting on those benches professing to belong to the Constitutional party, to be the only men capable of leading this House, and of helping us out of the dilemma, caused by maladministration, as it is called, into which we have been plunged—professing to uphold all principles of personal honor by acting in accordance with constitutional government—and for them to come down, after sitting on those benches week after week in the face of an adverse majority, to secure possession of them by such means is a pitiable spectacle; it is enough to make the House despair of honest government. We are told this is a deadlock. But what is the fact? Has it been the balance of a vote, turning one way to-day and another way to-morrow? There have been only two divisions since the present Government entered office, and we have had a majority of six; and a majority of six is quite enough for a Government in this House. A Ministry with a majority of six is far better than a Ministry with a majority of fourteen. It is better to have a strong Opposition. At any rate, we have had a majority of six; and we know it has been laid down by the highest authority in the colony that Ministers' votes are not to count, so that we have, according to that high authority, a majority of fourteen. Let me repeat how we have been led on. Day by day the honorable member for Waitemata has sat in our councils. Every act the party has taken has been either the result of his advice or in deference to his wishes, up till to-day. This deadlock, as it is called, is due to them. When the party did not think of going into opposition, the advice of himself and his three associates was, "We have the majority, and should assert it;" and their advice was followed. They have led us step by step, day after day, up to the present time; and now they turn round upon us and say, "See the confusion you are causing—you are ruining the country; and it is necessary for us to go over, in the interest of Auckland." Sir, which side was likely to give Auckland justice—which side now is likely to stand in the way of the interests of Auckland? If Auckland had wished to commit suicide, it has been done for her to-night. It is true we are surrounded by Auckland members in whom we still have confidence, but they cannot expect after this—after certain representatives of Auckland interests have put themselves up for sale—they cannot expect that Auckland claims will be recognized when it comes to solid voting on the estimates. And this farce about Auckland getting a balance-sheet and adjusting the public accounts! No man understands these public accounts. There have been numerous adjustments as between districts promised, but it has been found impossible to be done. It simply amounts to this: Ministers can go through these accounts and put down arbitrary sums, until they arrive at the precise amount to be paid. Then we are told there is no correspondence. Well, there is a memorandum in existence—a memorandum which

has been discussed by Ministers, and agreed to by Ministers. Yet the Premier says he will not produce it. Why did he vote for the production of it? Of course the honorable member for Geraldine told the truth when he said that the Government took the opportunity to conceal a defeat by voting with us. That was the real truth of the matter. I am not inclined to say more upon the subject: nothing beyond this. I should like, if I could, to follow the same line on this occasion that I took once before. I determined, rashly, in 1877, that those who deceived me should never have that support which before had been given them; and I say now, in the face of what I think is a shameful disaster that has happened, that in this chamber I shall continue to pay respect and attention to every member of the House as representing a constituency, because his every act is the act of his constituency; but, beyond that, I can have nothing to do with men who can lead us into a trap, and who can give their solemn word to you, who can pledge themselves to act with you in a particular course, and then, at the last moment, without a word of warning, can be false to you. I say, for my own part, and I say it with regret, I will not speak to or know outside this House any honorable gentleman who can betray confidence given by me, perhaps in innocence, but in integrity.

Mr. PYKE.—I took an opportunity of rising this afternoon to do, as I thought, a service to the Government. I had heard an ugly rumour floating through the lobbies and pervading Bellamy's, and I thought I would give the Government an opportunity of contradicting it, so that it should not go forth to the world that votes were being bought and paid for in this House. I was rather disappointed on their giving no answer to that. They did not clear themselves of the imputation cast upon them by such rumours being prevalent, which they might have done if those rumours had not been based upon truth; and the only answer the Premier deigned to give was to this effect: that when his policy was disclosed we should know whether it was true; and I have no doubt that when his policy is disclosed we shall know that it is true. I do not think that in the mind of any member of this House there can remain any feeling of doubt, either on one side or on the other, that these ugly rumours—for I still call them "ugly rumours"—are based upon fact. I have no doubt on the matter, because the Premier has not denied them—not a single member on the Government benches has denied them. We have had nothing but quibbling, equivocation, prevarication, hesitation, and reservation on the subject, while they ought to have been denied; and I again challenge the Government to say if these rumours be wrong. If the honorable gentleman at the head of the Government will get up and say these rumours are unfounded—that there has been no such transaction—I will sit down and not say another word on the subject.

Mr. HALL.—It is a highly improper thing to do.

Mr. PYKE.—The honorable gentleman laughs; but his laughter is like the laughter which is described as resembling "the crackling of thorns

under a pot." He will find out to his cost that that is the character of the laugh he has indulged in. I feel that these rumours are too true, and that it is a sorry day for New Zealand when Ministers dare not get up in their places and deny that they have offered a bribe of public works to the extent—if my information be correct—of one-fifth of the coming loan, in order to secure four votes. If such be the case—if they have given this sum for four votes, I must say they are very bad marketers, for they could have got many more votes for the same money. I do not think the game is worth the candle, because it will not give them a majority in this House. No member of the Middle Island who has been made acquainted with what has been going on can for a single moment doubt the propriety of joining the Opposition, and assisting to hurl from those benches gentlemen so unworthy to occupy them. It was only the other night that the Premier came to this House and commenced a very effective speech by declaring that, when he came in, he had made up his mind that he would make no personal allusions whatever. But he had not been on his feet ten minutes when he made the most violent personal allusion that ever I heard within the walls of this House. I refer to this because I intend to teach the Premier, if he is capable of being taught—which is exceedingly doubtful at his age—that he has set a very bad example to this House. I wish to tell him that, if our debates hitherto have not been characterized by a total avoidance of personalities, these, when indulged in, have been so deprecated as to check the recurrence of such an offence against the rules of parliamentary discussion. The honorable member made a very fair retort to some remarks which I had made on a previous occasion, but before he had done he hit below the belt—he gave an unfair blow; and I charge him with it. He struck below the belt when he said that, if there was a scandal, the scandal would be my sitting on those benches. I will not follow the bad example he has set me, or else I could point out that a very much worse scandal is being perpetrated by some of the honorable gentlemen sitting on those benches now. If he does not care for the dignity and honor of this House, I do. If he thinks he can come down from the House of Lords to this branch of the Legislature and introduce outrages on the debates of this House, I will not participate in the bad example set by the honorable gentleman. He talked of a scandal. Where is the scandal now? There is the scandal (pointing to the Government benches); here is the scandal (pointing to the honorable member for Waitemata): the scandal is in buying the votes of four members of this House.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable member is not in order in using such language; and he ought to withdraw it.

Mr. PYKE.—I withdraw the language, but I think it all the same. I will put it in other language. But, in the first place, I wish to draw your attention to this fact: that I did not first use the word "scandal." It was the Pre-

mier, who ought to set a good example to this House. The honorable member for Waitemata—who comes to our councils, who comes and directs our councils, who is one of the managing committee of the Opposition, who to within forty-eight hours,—aye, I may say, within thirty-six hours,—of the time at which he gave in his adhesion to the Government, was guiding and directing the Opposition—was all the time intriguing with Ministers to obtain that which he desired in reward for his giving his vote in their favour, and taking over with him three other honorable members, one of whom, up to this date, I believed to be one of the most honorable members of this House. That he did so is undoubtedly true; it is true, also, that he persuaded us to take measures that he must have known would be detrimental to the interests of the party; that he prevented our calling the party together by his advice; that he urged us to refuse to grant supplies, and also to refuse the offer of the Premier to take the debate on the motion of no confidence on Tuesday last. All this he did, and more. He has made a statement respecting a telegram which was sent to an Auckland paper. I have here the statement in my hand of the gentleman with whom he communicated, and I will read it to the House, with permission:—

“Montrose went to Mr. Reader Wood asking Wood to give him true information about the rumours, as he (Montrose) wished for it immediately, to send by telegraph to Auckland. Thereupon for that purpose Mr. Reader Wood gave the information. He therefore authorized the telegram.”

There is no getting out of that.

MR. READER WOOD.—I wish to state that there was not a word said to Mr. Montrose about telegrams.

MR. PYKE.—I accept the assurance of the honorable member for Waitemata, pending further inquiry. I have also the statement of another reporter, who was present at the time, that he did request the information in writing for the purpose of sending a telegram. And how any other interpretation can be put upon this matter, except by a quibbling with words—which no honest English gentleman would resort to—I am at a loss to understand. I do not charge the honorable gentleman with having changed his principles; I do not charge him with that. I believe he never had any to change. I remember in 1874 that honorable gentleman brought forward a motion for Abolition, which he failed in carrying out. In 1875 he attended a caucus meeting at the Ministerial residence in the Tinakori Road, and said, “If Abolition be one of the cardinal points of your policy, I am sorry to say I must retire, because I cannot support it;” and accordingly he went across the House. As far as my researches have gone, I have never been able to discover that the honorable member for Waitemata had any principles at all. There is one thing I am glad of, which this debate has brought about. We have been told for a long time past that honorable members of this House have been seduced by promises of money for public works. I am sure the Govern-

ment will acquit me of any charge of having ever gone to ask them for a single penny; but I have been told by member after member that they have been promised money to such an extent that, if the five-million loan came out in hard sovereigns to-morrow, there would not be half enough to meet the promises made by Government. I have kept a perfect record from time to time of the statements made by member after member, and I am perfectly certain that five millions will not be sufficient to meet all the promises which the present Government have made.

MR. HALL.—Read it out.

MR. PYKE.—If the honorable member thinks I will read out names, he must think I am as bad as the honorable member for Waitemata.

MR. HALL.—Will the honorable member read the amounts for the works, without the names?

MR. PYKE.—I do not divulge private conversations, or that which happens in private caucuses. I do not know what I may come to before I die; but, thank God, I have not yet come to that. The Government cannot possibly fulfil all their promises. If they fulfil one-tenth of them they will absorb all the loan. What! a million to Auckland to begin with! That is about the total to that part of the country, and the honorable gentleman (Mr. Hall) knows it.—(Laughter from Mr. HALL.)—Again the cracking of thorns under the pot. But, Sir, this thing has been going on in all directions. The other day our sight was regaled by a letter from a member of this House appearing in a newspaper, the *New Zealander*, showing the manner in which the Government were endeavouring to get votes, not upon questions of policy, not upon the way in which the government should be administered, nor upon large questions of that kind; but upon the question of how much each can get for his district. That is the policy of the Government, and nothing else. That is the way in which they endeavour to catch votes. What does the honorable gentleman say—the honorable member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters)? He writes,—

“I have the most positive assurances of support to both railways, harbour works, &c., from most of the leaders—viz., John Hall, McLean, Rolleston, Oliver, Atkinson, Bowen, and others. . . . I have also had many hours’ private conversation with leaders, upon harbour works and railways, with the view of obtaining a pledge before giving my support. It is extremely unfortunate, and much to be regretted, that there should be division between the Grey Valley members; and I tried to show Reeves that the Opposition was the proper side for us to take.”

Now, if that does not show that the Government policy is buying support with public money, I do not know what it shows. I say that such a corrupt state of things has never been known to exist in any part of the British dominions; and if the honorable member (Mr. Hall) comes here from the Legislative Council to lower the tone of the debates of this House, with which I charge him, and to corrupt its members by promises of money for public works, with which I also charge him, it were better that he had reposed there for ever, and never shown his face in a branch of the

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Legislature which he has attempted to degrade. We have not gained anything by his coming here. The Government sent to the Legislative Council a gentleman who had been rejected by a northern constituency, and the Hon. the Premier came from the Council here. This reminds me of the Ode to Saint Cecilia, which may be thus parodied :—

They raised a lawyer to the skies,
And sent a layman down.

I will not detain the House any longer; but I cannot conclude without saying, of the honorable member for Waitemata, that, by his conduct, he has damned himself to everlasting fame. There is no doubt about that. When he puts on his nightcap to-night he cannot help seriously reflecting on what he has done, and when he gets up in the morning he will arise with the consciousness that he has sold his party and sold his country—for what purpose is best known to himself.

Mr. TAINUI.—I stand up now to give an idea of what I feel. Such a thing has never before been heard of—of a Government promising to give to a particular place, such as Auckland, £500,000. I believe a thing of this kind is in the heart of every member of this House who has carefully considered it; and I believe with members hereafter it will be an established rule that they will go to the Government and ask what they can get for their particular districts; and, in the event of the Government not making those promises to different members, those members will go back to their seats and say, "Well, this is not a good Government." Those very members who are supporting the Government now, on the same terms will support the Opposition. I now understand that the public moneys of the colony are not fairly dealt out. I never heard of such an idea as the money of the colony being allowed to be used to buy the votes of members. I say to the House, "Let the Government be careful what they are going to do, and what they are going to promise," because some promises are carried out, and some are only half gone through. And I come to the conclusion that the Government has sought out this way of procedure. It is a very fair thing for the members of this House to investigate the matter connected with those members who have turned over to the Government. If this had been done by the Maori members in this House, we should have been blamed all round by every member. Let the House consider this: that, when the member for the Eastern Maori District left his seat on the Government benches, he did so on very good grounds, and grounds that were justifiable. They were these: The Native Minister in his Ministerial speech said something about abolishing the Native Department. As far as I know, the Parliament has been in existence for about twenty years, and the word has only cropped up now to abolish the Native Department. The House is perfectly well aware of the Treaty of Waitangi, and that agreements were made in that treaty vesting certain rights in the Maoris. I am of opinion that the abolition of the Native Department is a thing that was carefully deliberated over by the present Government. If you abolish the Native Department,

how can you manage Native affairs—through what channel? To my idea, this Government have in their minds certain half-measures which are to affect the Maori people. I know also that the Maori people are looked upon in a very favourable light by the Crown. That is why I now say, Do not bring on to the Maoris these half-measures, whatever they are, but amend such Acts at present existing as are detrimental to their interests. There are two features connected with the business of this House—the affairs on the European side and those on the Maori side; and I firmly believe that they are both equal in importance—in fact, I believe the Maori question is the more important. The House should consider these things, and give to the Maori what he is entitled to, and deal fairly with him in everything. Every member who gets up in this House and makes a speech refers to Te Whiti and to Tawhiao, of the Waikato. They talk a great deal about these things: but I ask the House to remedy the grievances of the Maoris, and deal with the land in a proper light. The reason why I will not give my vote to the Premier is, because I know it was he who did certain things which were very injurious to the Maoris of the other Island. But if the Ministers of the present Government were to repent of the sins they have committed on the Maoris of the other Island, then they might expect some consideration. I have received a letter from the Natives of the other Island expressing deep sorrow at the defeat of the late Government, and great love for them and Sir George Grey. That letter was enclosed to me. The only Minister, in my mind, who is of any account in the present Government is Mr. Rolleston. I know this, and the Maoris of the Middle Island also know it. If that honorable gentleman had been made Premier, he would have had our support. If any member of this House were to say that my vote could be bought, I should deny it. I was returned to this House by my constituents to attend to their grievances, and I now say that if the present Government act fairly and justly towards the Maoris they will probably be some time in office; but, if they fail in that and do not attend to these grievances of the Maoris, I do not suppose they will be more than six months in office—they will come over to the side of the House which my party now occupy.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I do not think that in an irregular debate, such as this appears to be, many words are called for. But it is very desirable that men who are representing Auckland constituencies in this House should declare the ground on which they stand and the line they purpose taking; and it is for that reason alone I venture to address the House at this late hour. As a young member of a party in this House, having very little feeling as to what men should be in office or what men should be out of office, provided they are honest, I trust to the leadership of abler and more experienced men in these matters; and I suppose we may take it for granted that that is the position that all new members must take up at first: and when the leaders they have trusted have led them into anything like a false position, it is time

enough to declaim against them then, and not a moment sooner. Some of the honorable members who are alluded to as having broken faith with other members of the party to which they belonged are men for whom I have had the greatest respect; and, notwithstanding what has occurred, that respect still remains, although of a different character. But, at the same time, before I proceed to speak of these gentlemen in detail, I must say that there is one of them at least from whom I fully expected this action: indeed, I was only astonished it had not taken place before. I feel quite satisfied that, when the news is wafted up to Auckland of what has occurred here to-day, there will be hundreds of men who gave their votes for the honorable member for Auckland City West who will say, "He has done exactly what I expected he would do." There was an intense feeling there amongst men who voted for the honorable member simply because he was the nominee of the party, that he would ultimately sell the party; and I trust I shall be forgiven the bluntness of my speech in saying that he has done what it was fully expected he would do. As a young man who long desired a seat in this Chamber, my feelings at the present moment are these: that, having once entered into a compact with honorable men, I would rather forfeit that seat which I had striven so hard to obtain than in any sense depart from that compact; and I should be quite prepared at the present moment to surrender my seat rather than betray the confidence of gentlemen who reposed trust in me. But I think it very hard that, after we had trustingly placed our consciences and our actions in the hands of a man whom we looked upon as an old and experienced leader, we should be led into such a position as this. That gentleman, I may say—as it seems to be the rule to-day to refer to matters that have occurred outside—sat beside me at what is termed the caucus, and after Sir George Grey had deliberately, of his own motion, and uninfluenced by any of those who are called his personal followers, resigned the leadership of his party in an honorable, straightforward, and patriotic manner, the honorable member for Waitemata proposed his successor. I must corroborate the statement made by the honorable member for Waitemata that at the first meeting he took up a certain line; for, notwithstanding any heat or feeling that may exist, I think it desirable that we should endeavour to adhere strictly to the truth in all these matters: but with regard to the following meetings the full truth was not told by him. I say unhesitatingly that the arrangement made with the honorable member for Port Chalmers was that he was to be leader to the end of the session; and that was done with the full concurrence of the honorable gentleman who had retired from the leadership of the party. I do not wish to refer to the statement made to-night by the honorable member for Geraldine, but I must say most distinctly, in defence of the honorable member for the Thames, who is absent, and in defence of those members who have pinned their faith to him, that, he having agreed to retire from the leadership of the party, and having stated that

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he would not take office in any Government formed from that party, we should have carried out that agreement to the letter. It is wrong, therefore, for the honorable gentleman to say that it was merely an attempt on the part of the followers of Sir George Grey to get him into office again by a side-wind. There was no such intention on the part of those members. But the honorable member for Waitemata tells us that he was deserted by his leader, the honorable member for Port Chalmers; and when we come to look for the proof of it, it is this: that the honorable member for Port Chalmers, with that Scotch modesty which characterizes him, seems to have had a very low estimate of his own capabilities as leader, and, because he mentioned this to his party, that is taken as a desertion of leadership by him. Could anything be more absurd or unjust than to put such a construction upon that statement? The Premier tells us that this conversation was of a character similar to the negotiations he had with these four gentlemen; but there is as great a difference between the two as between light and darkness, for the simple reason that the Premier was entering into negotiations with the distinct object of getting certain members to vote with him, while the conversation of the honorable member for Port Chalmers was held with a man who was already in unison with his party.

Mr. HALL.—There was no such conversation as the honorable gentleman refers to between myself and the four members alluded to.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I can assure the honorable gentleman that I exactly understand the position with regard to the negotiations, and I am in a position to say that there is a vast difference between the two things. Then, again, the Premier tells us that there is no correspondence to produce, notwithstanding the fact that he himself voted that it should be produced. He did that for either of two purposes, or perhaps for both. He perhaps voted for it in order to avoid the defeat of the Government, and he perhaps voted for it because he believed that no such correspondence could be produced. He therefore placed himself and us in the absurd position of voting for a correspondence which he says does not exist. But I say there does exist a document in connection with the matter—a document which has met with the approval of Ministers; and if they have not got a copy they can get it. Perhaps it is wrong to call it a correspondence, because there may be a letter from one side only; but I believe it is correct to say that there is a memorandum in existence, and, if the Government have not a copy of it, they will perhaps find that the original will turn up before very long. Now, I have a distinct and clear respect for the honorable member for Waitemata. His abilities are such that they have become colonial property. Those of us who are young men have read of his actions in the past with the greatest interest, and we have learned much of the history of the country in connection with his name. Still, it is a matter of extreme regret that, whilst he considered it necessary in the interests of the colony to change his side of the House—a thing he had a perfect right to do—he should say we had not entered into a

compact such as I have described. I give a most distinct denial to his statement of the position. I believed from the honorable gentleman's antecedents that we might safely trust to his guidance in all times of difficulty and trial. I could not believe that he would depart from an engagement honorably entered into with those who trusted him as a leader amongst themselves; but to-day we have had sad proof of his insincerity. If there is a man in this House whom I respect above all others it is the honorable member for Newton. He is, in a sense, my political godfather, and I say he has not treated me justly. If he considered it his duty to be on that Government bench, it ought also to be my duty to be there. If, in the interests of the province we come from, he thought it necessary to take the step he has taken, it was his duty to acquaint those who think and wish to act with him of what he was going to do—to show us the advantage of it—and we would have gone with him with pleasure. A great deal is said about personal following, and it is said that some men have two or three other members whom they can make vote with them on all occasions. Now, I take this position: that, unless I can see my way clear to vote in any particular direction upon any public question, I will not do it for any man in this House; but I had laid down this rule, that in all matters of doubt, particularly on local subjects, wherever the honorable member for Newton led the way, I should be behind him. But what has he done in this case? He has put us in the position of voting in the opposite lobby against him. Had he given us a single word, it is possible that we should all have been with him; but we have not been treated with even that courtesy. With regard to the honorable member for Port Chalmers, this is the position of affairs: We agreed to accept the resignation of the then legitimate leader of the Liberal party, the man who under all circumstances should have retained that lead; but, seeing that he voluntarily proposed that he should stand on one side, and said he did not intend to take office again, and seeing that the honorable member for Waitemata proposed that the honorable member for Port Chalmers should be leader of the party, I say that, looking at all these things, no man with the slightest pretensions to honor could recede from the position of voting for the want-of-confidence motion. These are the feelings of us young men; and I hope that as we grow older the same feelings of common honor will not be struck out of our hearts by the contaminating influence of political apostasy. I do not find fault with what the honorable gentlemen did, but I find fault with them for not giving us notice. A few days ago the honorable member for Waitemata spoke against going into Committee of Supply; and yet to-night he tells us that that is one of the things he objected to. It may be that he objected then, but he took a strange way of showing it, by speaking in favour of that very course. The honorable member for Mount Ida has expressed to the full my own feelings in this matter. I like the ring of honesty to run through a man's dealings, and, however it may suit persons on both sides of the House to trim and cut about on cer-

tain occasions, I hope we shall find something like honesty in the new men. But, with regard to this bargain that has been made on behalf of Auckland, it seems to me that the object of the honorable member for Waitemata has not been gained. It has only complicated matters still further. Instead of a pronounced majority going against the Government, they will have a majority of two; and if any man strays away from their side, there will be another deadlock. Then we shall have the proceedings of the past fortnight over again. As to the terms offered, I presume the honorable member for Newton insisted on making terms in regard to the education question because he distrusted the Ministry. He was right in distrusting them; but it certainly seems an extraordinary way to secure the permanence of the present system, to extract a pledge from them that they would let it alone. Would it not have been better to trust to the natural protectors of the system on all sides of the House than to make a bargain behind the scenes unknown to the people with whom he was accustomed to act? Then, there is another peculiar feature in the whole matter. If the proposal made by those gentlemen to the Government means anything, it means this: Either there has been a great wrong done to the Provincial District of Auckland, and they are going to rectify it, or the Government mean that an inquiry will show that there is no more money to be spent there in the rectification of that wrong. What, then, has Auckland gained by the division of our votes in this matter? Furthermore, I ask, who has proved that Auckland was in such danger of justice not being done to her that these gentlemen should have made a compact with the Government? Is it not admitted that all sides agree and insist that so long as fair and honorable dealings are carried on in this House each portion of the colony shall have its share of justice done to it? What cry has rung more in our ears during the last few weeks than that there shall be no more of these demands and compacts for making roads and bridges? Both Ministries, that which now sits on the Government benches and that which has lately left them, have stated most distinctly that they will no longer submit to pressure of that kind; and yet this is the compact that is now made. I hope honorable gentlemen will not be led astray by such delusive offers—for delusive they are, and nothing else. If anything is to be obtained for any particular district of the colony—for Otago, for Auckland, for Nelson, for any district—it is the intrinsic justice of the claim that this House will consider; and if that claim is not a just one this House will refuse it positively. The surest way to bring danger to a district is to divide its members in this way, and bring down opposition from other places—an opposition which I trust they will not show on this occasion if this claim is just, but which I say if it is unjust they would be perfectly justified in showing. The honorable member for Geraldine made one of his characteristic speeches—a speech evidently prepared for the no-confidence motion, and not for this debate. I compare that speech with the

speech of the honorable gentleman who followed; and I say, when men want conviction, when they want an honest and careful examination of a subject, commend me to the honorable member for Mount Ida, who speaks from his heart the feelings that are burning in him, and which he thinks must have utterance, and not to the man whose sentiments are cleverly put together, and clothed in beautiful words, but contain no particle of the public spirit which should actuate all members of this House. I have only to say, before sitting down, that I have no objection to honorable gentlemen changing their party, but I do object to their placing themselves in such a position as that into which the honorable member for Waitemata has got. He gave in his allegiance to the honorable member for Port Chalmers, and promised to support him, and then, without any notice of what he is about to do, he goes over to the other side, leaving us behind to bear the brunt. I do not think the position is creditable to him. I do not mind the change, but the way in which it was done—there is where the sore lies. If it was right for those honorable members to go over, it was right for us also; but the right has not been shown, and for myself I say I shall stick to the last to the agreement made with the honorable member for Port Chalmers, whether he be successful or unsuccessful.

Mr. TAWHAI.—Sir, I feel very grieved now that I stand up to speak, and why I am so sorrowful is that some of the Auckland members have behaved like rats. I thought it was for me, the Maori, to behave like a rat, because the food of my ancestors was rats. It also grieves me to see the European people—the people I ought to look up to—behaving so badly. It is not a good thing to be said that these members have gone over because their votes have been bought. I am a Maori, and my vote will never be bought. We, the members for Auckland, came here to support Sir George Grey. I have also heard the honorable member for Waitemata say he has great respect for Sir George Grey personally; but I do not think he could have had much respect for him, because he now turns round and opposes him, because Sir George Grey had already resigned, and said he wished Mr. Macandrew to take his place. When the honorable member for Waitemata spoke, he then opposed Sir George Grey, because he had given his vote to the side which was opposed to Sir George Grey and Mr. Macandrew. I do not think it was a right thing for those members from Auckland to do, to go to the other side and oppose their fellow-representatives. I have more reason than they have for doing so, because when the present Government were in opposition they said that if I would give my vote to their side they would stop the petition of Sydney Taiwhanga. But I was not afraid, and I said I would not allow that to turn my vote away from my friend Sir George Grey. I am now still pursued, and I have had a writ issued upon me from the Supreme Court; but I will never change until the day of my death. I think it is a very great honor that I should be put in

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gaol for standing up for what I believe to be right. I should be much more afraid of doing wrong and deviating from the path that I think right than I should be of being sent to gaol. Although a drawn sword should be presented to kill me, or make me do that which was wrong, I should not do it, but do what I think right, and stand by Sir George Grey. I would not do as those four members have already done. The reason why I have faith in Sir George Grey is, that I have watched him for many years while he was Governor, and up to the present time. I have listened to the hard things that have been said about Sir George Grey. This Government abused Sir George Grey personally, but they have taken all his ideas and the things that he has prepared. These Auckland members believe in Sir George Grey personally, but what they dislike is that he has handed over the Opposition to Mr. Macandrew. I do not know why Sir George Grey has been so much abused. All the troubles that have come upon this Island have not come through Sir George Grey; but the reason he has been so abused is that he has been so attentive and careful to the Natives. The great fault we have to find with the present Government is with regard to the Natives. I do not like what has been said about abolishing the Native Office, and with regard to the votes—that Natives should not have any votes in the European elections. Sir George Grey has striven to bring the two races together, and I am pleased with this idea. I have never seen Sir George Grey deviate to one side or the other: he has always gone on the principle of dealing fairly with both races. The Auckland members have gone from us without telling us, so that we did not know till to-night that they were going from us. Now the Auckland vote has been split, some for one side and some for the other. I shall feel inclined, when Auckland things are brought forward, to go right away and vote for things for Otago. I can see no good to come from this division of their vote. They have gone from us without saying they were going, and I shall feel inclined to go my own way without saying anything about it. I shall never go from what I think is right, although I may be killed, or summoned, or buried, and I shall vote for Sir George Grey.

Mr. HISLOP.—Sir, there is a phase of the matter under consideration which has not been sufficiently dwelt upon, and which I would like to bring under the notice of the House. I do not intend to give that notice to the honorable member for Waitemata which he has received at the hands of other honorable members, because I believe that the proclamation of his perfidy to-day debars him almost from receiving notice at the hands of any person who at all regards personal or political honor. I only rise at the present time for the purpose of pointing out that which I regret to see on the other side of the House. If there is one thing which we as politicians ought to desire, it is that we should have, on both sides of the House, persons for whom we have some regard, and in whom we have some pride. If there was one thing which drew us towards the present Ministry, it was the fact

that, with very few exceptions, it was composed of gentlemen for whom personally I had the highest respect, and that they formed as good a Government as could be chosen from those who think as they do in this country. But I regretted to see this afternoon, when the honorable member for Waitemata was publishing to the world his unfaithfulness, his disregard for all principles which ought to actuate gentlemen, that honorable members on the other side of the House applauded his conduct. It does not matter to me which side of the House I may be on, it is never a source of gratification to me, even when it gives my side a vote, to see any person walk from one side to the other when his motives can be called in question. If we wish to establish in this House a reputation for justice, a reputation which we should be proud to think belonged to such an Assembly as this, we should place our motives as far as possible above question. Can it be said of the honorable member for Waitemata that he has been actuated by a sentiment of good faith towards those with whom he has been acting, or that he has gone over to the other side with motives which can be regarded as at all fair and proper? There are many principles which have been traversed by the action of the honorable member. The first principle is one which ought to guide every person—namely, that, with regard to those persons with whom one is acting, the greatest scrupulosity ought to be shown in adhering to promises either implied or expressed. Now, what does the honorable member for Waitemata state? That shortly after the division took place which ousted the late Government a caucus was held at which he attended. At that caucus he, along with other honorable members, agreed upon a certain course to be followed. Not only did he agree to that course, but he was also the suggester of it. He states that shortly after that solemn compact was entered into, owing to circumstances which have since arisen, his promises were dissolved. If that is the principle which is to be acted upon, what security has any person that any promise, however faithfully entered into, will be carried out? What security have those honorable gentlemen who have sold their political and personal reputation for the purpose of getting something from honorable gentlemen on those benches, that circumstances will not arise by which every one of those promises will be dissolved by the present Government? The honorable member at the head of the Government stated that he desired at some time or another to secure for this country that system of education which he himself advocated. Well, a circumstance may arise hereafter which may dissolve the promise made on this subject, and that circumstance will simply be the ability to carry those views in the House. What security has the honorable member for Newton—I only mention the honorable member's name because I have heard it mentioned in this House, and I have not yet received any direct statement from him as to whether he has acted in the way suggested—that the honorable members on those benches, who can so disregard all the proper principles of constitutional government, who can applaud a person in this House

who says circumstances dissolve promises, will not repudiate their own promises on account of circumstances which may arise hereafter? The honorable member for Geraldine, in one of those speeches characteristic of himself, tried to throw ridicule on this side of the House by showing how many members might possibly expect office. I can tell that honorable gentleman and those on his side that, now we have got quit of the honorable member for Waitemata and the honorable member for Auckland City West, I do not believe there is one honorable member on this side who regards the attainment of office as any consideration at all in his political actions. There is no doubt that every person who considers he has the ability has a right—and it is not only a right, but a duty to himself and to the country—to endeavour at some time to occupy those benches. But if he occupies them at the expense of his own personal honor he does greater harm than any legislation could possibly do to this country. Any person who can sacrifice personal honor for such an object shows such an example to all times that we can have no security for promises between men, and no security that that which is our only safeguard will be attended to—namely, constitutional and personal morality. The honorable member for Geraldine stated that in 1872 a parallel case occurred in this House. I say it is a slander on Mr. Parker and others to state that what has now taken place is a parallel case with what took place then. The gentlemen who then left the Vogel party did so after due notice given to that side, and for reasons which they explained. The honorable member for Waitemata, and other honorable members who may be acting with him, have taken their present action without any notice to the side they were acting with. Not only so, but they were actually negotiating with the present Government when they pretended to be supporters and guides of our side. What are the facts? I understand from what has now taken place that the honorable member for Waitemata so long ago as a fortnight was laying the scheme which has now ripened. Circumstances which I am not about to mention, because I have a regard for private conversations, have happened, showing clearly that that honorable gentleman, while pretending to be a supporter of the Opposition party, while pretending to lay schemes by which honorable members on the Government benches could be ousted, was actually negotiating for the purpose of carrying out that which is expected to be carried out, but which, I believe, never will be. What is the difference between what took place in 1872 and what has taken place to-day? None of the principles traversed by honorable members on this occasion were traversed at that time by the honorable members who have been mentioned, and who then acted as honorable gentlemen would. I do not believe there is a member in this House who, after taking into consideration what was stated to-day by the honorable member for Waitemata, and knowing what was done during the last fortnight, can approve of his action. The honorable member stated he would be execrated by one side and called a patriot by the other. I do not believe it. He

may be called a patriot by the other side, but beneath the expression there will be a smile of derision and a feeling of contempt. I do not believe there is a single honorable member in this House, who has any regard for personal honesty, any regard for the faith which should exist between persons acting together in one cause, who will not entertain the same opinion as that which has been expressed by the honorable member for Mount Ida, and which will lead up to the action he has stated. Sir, the honorable member for Waitemata stated—and I took the opportunity of contradicting him when he stated it—that in a particular caucus he urged upon the Opposition that they should attempt to force back Sir George Grey into the Government. I have no recollection of any such statement. What I do recollect is this: that the honorable member advocated that the then Ministry should send in their resignation, and said he felt sure that before long the then Opposition would fall to pieces, and then he would force back his own party to power; but no particular mention was made of any name. I believe I shall be borne out in that by almost every honorable member who was present. I do not know what was going on between the honorable gentleman and any other person at that time; but I can quite understand that the honorable gentleman, whilst pretending—as he did to many members on this side of the House—that he was anxious to get quit of Sir George Grey, the honorable member for the Thames, as leader—while pretending that to us, may have been flattering the honorable member for the Thames all the time. That is quite in accord with the action he has taken since, and I should not be astonished to hear that it was true; but that he came forward and advocated in that caucus what he states, is quite untrue. Sir, the honorable gentleman, in order to assert his right to be called a patriot, has come down and endeavoured to deceive this House by laying claim to that term; by stating that he was anxious to see the business carried on—that he did not like to see the deadlock that had taken place—that he feared the country was going to ruin while we were fighting for office. I should like to know who was the chief hand in making the look. Why, it was the honorable gentleman himself. It was the honorable gentleman, as has been said over and over again, who proposed that the honorable member for Port Chalmers should be the leader of the Opposition, and that he should be the leader right through the session. He was the honorable member who suggested and strongly advocated the stopping of supplies until the members on the Government benches should recognize that constitutional government should exist in this country in a pure form. He was the honorable gentleman who all through was, on account of his experience, looked upon as the one who could guide us, and to whom we could look for guidance. I cannot understand how any men pretending to the feelings of gentlemen, on the other side of the House, can applaud conduct such as that confessed to us to-day—namely, that, while advocating all these things in caucuses from day to day, while he was

actually smiling on us in our caucuses, he had murder in his heart. What was the murder? It was not the murder of the wretched body; it was the murder of conscience. It was the murder of anything like confidence in one another that any conversation entered into privately would not be for party purposes divulged in the House. It was the murder of anything like faithfulness between various members of a party working for a particular object; and I say it was the murder of anything like party or constitutional government in this House. Well, the honorable member met us there, and did what I have stated. Now he pretends to have found out to-day—or yesterday at the earliest—that all these great difficulties were arising in the country, and that they required to be remedied. I should say that any person who had the slightest regard for good faith would have stated to those with whom he was acting the difficulties which had arisen and the remedies which he intended to suggest. It would have been a perfectly easy thing for him to have said in the caucuses, "Now, I think the financial difficulties of the country are paramount to everything else. It is necessary that party warfare should cease; and the only way it can cease is by our allowing the Government to go on with the business." But he does not do that. He goes first of all and makes terms for his province, and then he makes terms for one of his colleagues. I should say that when an honorable member thought it was necessary to go—for party purposes or for the good of the country—from one side of the House to the other, he would see that that which ought to be dearest to a politician, his personal honor, should be preserved while he was doing it; and, having regard to that, he should not lay a trap for another honorable member who may be weaker than himself, and who may be more liable to be influenced to go over from the party with which he had been acting. There is another thing I should like to mention, and it is this: The honorable member has thought that he was justified, because he changed his party, in divulging private conversations which have taken place. He is welcome to the other side if that is his principle. I congratulate the other side if, in pursuance of the understanding come to, the honorable gentleman should afterwards be relegated to another Chamber to represent the Government there; or if he should, after a while, take the position of Colonial Treasurer or even Premier, and if there should afterwards be any disagreement in Cabinet, I congratulate his colleagues upon what will befall them thereafter. If he has been so untrue, so unfaithful, so forgetful of all the principles that should actuate honorable gentlemen on either side of the House, I congratulate this side of the House that we are quit of him. I am only astonished that, knowing his reputation, knowing his action in former times—I am only sorry that he should have been so far trusted by the leaders on this side of the House as to be put in any responsible position, because the perfidy he has shown is not that of an ordinary member on this side of the House, it is that of a member who has been actually trusted by

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ten or twelve of his own colleagues to carry out, from the view of this side of the House, those principles which they wished advocated. What has he done to those honorable members who put their trust in him? He has been unfaithful to the trust reposed in him by those members. He has entered into a conspiracy to sell his support to that side of the House, forgetful altogether of what might be desired by the other persons who reposed such trust in him. Well, Sir, for this conduct he has been applauded by honorable members on the other side of the House. I say that I feel thankful that I am not a member of that side of the House. If there is anything which is likely to disturb the feeling that should exist on either side of the House, it is the action of those honorable members to whom I am now referring. Honorable members opposite surely do not suppose that feelings will not be disturbed by such action. The Government cannot suppose that, honorable members having acted as these honorable gentlemen have done, they are not participants in the shame which has fallen on that side of the House. They cannot suppose that, even as opponents, this side of the House can have that confidence which they would have in honorable opponents who would not stoop to such acts as they have stooped to. Sir, I feel that I am speaking very strongly on this subject, but I cannot help it. I believe the struggle engaged in by this side of the House has been for a number of years to purify the atmosphere of this House, and to elevate its tone. It has been degraded by the system initiated in 1870. That system had been going on, and the tone of the House was, until three years ago, becoming more degraded every year. One of the strong arguments in favour of the abolition of provinces, as was frequently stated in this House, was that after that took place there would be no mention at all of the distribution of money throughout the country—that there would be some settled principle upon which that could be done, and that roads and bridges would only be mentioned here by way of congratulation. For the last two years I believe a good deal has been done to elevate the tone of the House, and I am sorry that upon this side of the House there should arise a conviction that hereafter this tone, instead of being elevated, will be degraded. I do not regard this action from a political standpoint. I can respect honorable members who go from one side of the House to the other when they think that by so doing they are really forwarding the interests of the whole colony; but I cannot respect honorable gentlemen who go from one side of the House to the other from purely local influence. It is introducing a system which ought not to be encouraged, and which ought to be stamped out. I cannot understand honorable members like the honorable member for Avon, the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, or the honorable member for Kaiapoi, who pretend to have such a regard for the tone of this House—I cannot understand how they, having a regard for the personal honor of members, can applaud the action that was divulged to us to-day. I have referred to the honorable member for Waitemata

more particularly. It has been stated that the honorable member for Newton intends to leave this side of the House and go to the other side. I refuse to believe it until I actually see it. The honorable gentleman, as has been stated by the honorable member for Mount Ida, has been to me a model by which I should attempt to mould my own action. I looked upon him as one who has first of all the interests of the whole colony at heart, and one who regarded faithfulness to those with whom he was acting as the moving principle of his political existence. I refuse to believe, until I actually see it, that the honorable gentleman is going to give up the reputation which he has acquired for honesty and faithfulness—that he is going to give up that reputation for the sake of the small, paltry, and base bribe that has been offered to him. There is one other matter I should like to refer to. A motion was made and carried for the production of any correspondence that has taken place between the honorable gentlemen alluded to and the Government. First of all the honorable member at the head of the Government tried to evade giving up that correspondence on the ground that it was a private correspondence. I should like to know what right any honorable members on those benches have to carry on a private correspondence with members of this House with regard to the distribution of money belonging to the public. Surely public funds are not to be distributed by means of private and confidential communications passing between the Government and members of this House. I have always understood that correspondence which affected dealings with public moneys and the execution of public works was public correspondence, which this House was entitled to call for. Yet now we are told that, notwithstanding the urgency with which they endeavoured at first to get the honorable member for Waitemata and the honorable member for Newton to vote against the production of the correspondence—notwithstanding their eager desire to thwart us in an attempt to get at it—we are now told that there is none at all. I have only to state, with regard to that, that I was told by a leading member on that side of the House that a document had actually been written, and I defy honorable members on the Government benches to deny that such a document has been signed. If they do deny it, then I will ask the honorable member for Newton whether it is not a fact that a document containing certain terms was sent to the Government and approved by them. It is a mere evasion to say there was no correspondence, and it is not setting up that high standard which we were led to expect from this moral Government—a Government which would even satisfy the fastidiousness of the honorable member for Cheviot. Now that I have mentioned the name of the honorable member for Cheviot, I may say I think we on this side are entitled to claim his vote. He said a few days ago, with regard to the statement from those benches that certain scandals should be cleared up, that unless it was proved there were scandals, and such scandals were exposed, he would in future vote on this side of the House. Where are the scandals now?

Mr. SAUNDERS.—Joshua Joneses.

Mr. HISLOP.—I should like the honorable member to mention another.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—There are a good many of them in the country.

Mr. HISLOP.—As to Joshua Jones, we have been fully informed about that by the late Government. This Government was placed upon those benches to give us pure administration—for the purpose of stopping bribes, for the purpose of defeating the system of a block vote from one particular part of the colony: yet what is the first political act they have done? It is to belie all their professions and expressed desires, and to go back to the system which obtained from 1870 to 1877—to subordinate political action and political propriety to the carrying-out of public works. The honorable member for Waitemata has made a most jesuitical attempt to show that he has done nothing which ought not to have been done with regard to those works. What is all this cry from Auckland about the colony giving Auckland justice? Have not these persons who cry for justice gone into the question, and arrived at an estimate as to what Auckland is entitled to? Does the honorable member for Waitemata wish the House to believe that he has not gone into the question, and not arrived at a definite conclusion as to what he wants for Auckland? I cannot believe that there was no communication between him and the members of the Government as to what he really expected to get at their hands. I have to apologize to the House for speaking so long; but I could not allow the debate to go without expressing myself with regard to what has taken place. I do not think that any language which has been used on this side of the House to-night with reference to the honorable gentleman has been strong enough to characterize his conduct, nor do I think that anything which has been said has indicated sufficiently the baneful effect such conduct is likely to have upon the political history of the colony, and also upon our social history, because, to a great extent, our social morality depends upon the morality of this House—of the representatives of the people. I do not sympathize with those who say they still have some of the respect for him which they formerly had. Any respect I have had for that honorable gentleman is gone, and I do not think any action which he may ever take hereafter can in any degree restore him to that position in my respect which he once occupied. I can still quite admire his power of oratory, his logical mind, and his keenness in argument; but I grieve that those gifts should have been turned to such a purpose as they have been turned to to-day. We were told by the honorable member at the head of the Government that an excess of virtue was vice. Well, great ability, when coupled with unfaithfulness, renders such unfaithfulness the more harmful; and any admiration which I formerly had for the honorable gentleman must now sink into another feeling altogether. I need not refer to the honorable members for Marsden and Auckland City West, except to say that there are circumstances known to the honorable member

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for Marsden and myself which, if known to this House, would place him in a peculiar position with regard to this sudden conversion. If the honorable member for Marsden is going to be so untrue to himself—if he has promised his vote to that side of the House—I can only say I consider the honorable member, under the circumstances, is possessed of very little spirit. If conduct had been pursued towards me such as has been pursued towards that honorable gentleman by that side of the House, no inducement whatever would have led me to support them. I do not feel justified in referring specifically to those matters which I have mentioned; but, if the honorable member wishes to challenge the opinions I have expressed, I will state what occurred, and then the House can judge whether I have exaggerated in my statement or not. I only hope the conduct of these honorable gentlemen may be placed before the House and the country in its true light, and that a feeling will be expressed against the practice which seems to be growing up in this House—the fickle changing by members of their opinions and votes. Even the ranks of the Government contain men who have shown great facility in changing their opinions of persons and matters. The honorable member for Mount Ida referred to the Minister of Mines smiling at him when he was characterizing the conduct of the honorable member for Waitemata. I should very much like to hear the Minister of Mines justify himself to the House for his own conduct when he changed from one side of the House to the other. I think it will be admitted he took a great many members of this House by surprise. I think, if the conduct of the honorable member for Waitemata meets with the reprobation it deserves, it may lead to the setting-up of a higher tone in the House, and, in that light, may not be an unmixed evil: that is the only possible redeeming feature.

Mr. PYKE.—Sir, I rise in personal explanation. In the course of a few remarks I addressed to the House to-night I made a statement with regard to a telegram forwarded to Auckland on the authority of the honorable member for Waitemata. The honorable member denied having given such authority; but I have now put myself in a position to confirm the statement I made. I will read correspondence on the subject. I asked the honorable gentleman who had sent the telegram to state what occurred; and he writes,—

“MR. PYKE,—The effect of the letter which I wrote to Mr. Reader Wood yesterday, while the House was sitting, was, as nearly as I can remember, as follows: that I had heard a rumour that he (Mr. Reader Wood), Mr. Hurst, Mr. Swanson, and Captain Colbeck had joined the Government; and I desired to know if there was any truth in the report, as I wanted to telegraph to Auckland a confirmation or contradiction immediately: and I added that I would wait in the Press-room on the ground-floor for a reply. Mr. Wood came out a few minutes after the note was intrusted to a messenger for delivery. I am absolutely positive that I mentioned that I desired to telegraph, and he gave me the information in consequence of my note.

“CHAS. O. MONTROSE.”

To that I replied,—

"Friday Evening, 24th October, 1879.

"MR. MONTROSE.—Will you kindly state whether, in the course of your interview with Mr. Reader Wood yesterday, he mentioned the amount which he expected would accrue to Auckland from the arrangement he was making with the Government?—Yours truly,

"VINCENT PYKE."

I received the following answer:—

"Press-room, 24th October, 1879.

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to your note just received, I beg to state that, as Mr. Reader Wood made no secret of the conversation which he had with me in consequence of my note to him, I see no reason why I should not state the conversation itself. With regard to the amount which Mr. Wood expected would accrue to Auckland, what he said was this: That Mr. Hall had agreed that an examination should be made of the amounts expended on public works in the different provincial districts, and it was thought probable that the amount which Auckland would receive would be about half a million.—Yours faithfully,

"CHAS. O. MONTROSE."

The following is a memorandum by an independent witness as to the first letter:—

"I saw Mr. Montrose's note to Mr. Wood, and saw Mr. Wood come out and call Mr. Montrose out of the reporters' room. My recollection of the contents of Mr. Montrose's note entirely confirms Mr. Montrose's statement. The information was certainly asked for telegraphing.

"E. T. GILLON."

MR. READER WOOD.—This practice of repeating conversations and recalling conversations may really mislead the House very much. Now, I stated distinctly, with regard to the letter that Mr. Montrose wrote to me, that I did not recollect the words in that letter; I tore it up. I do not mean to say the words were not in it, but I do not recollect them. I received the note, read it hastily, and at once went out to see Mr. Montrose, knowing that he wanted information. As the statement contained in the letter was not true, I went to see Mr. Montrose, and met him in the passage. As I stated this afternoon, I told him briefly what had been taking place. I certainly did not mention Mr. Hall's name. I stated to him first of all what I stated this afternoon, and then I added, "This may be half a million, or five hundred thousand pounds." Now, Sir, that is my recollection; and I certainly did not mention Mr. Hall's name, because he will bear me witness that I have never spoken to him on the subject from beginning to end. I have spoken to Mr. Whitaker, and I do not think I mentioned Mr. Whitaker's name. The five hundred thousand pounds was simply a casual remark from me as to what the amount might be. It might be more or it might be less; I cannot say.

Major TE WHEORO.—I should like to offer a few remarks with regard to what has been said about the four members from Auckland. When I came from the Waikato, the Auckland members were all one body; I was the only one apart from them. But my particular friend was the honorable member for Newton, Mr. Swanson—a good

and true man. He it was who principally persuaded me to join the Auckland side. I looked at it in the light of his being the only true man among the Auckland members. But to-night great sadness has come over me, when I have heard allusions made to his having gone over to the other side. When these four members choose to depart from their party, I look at it in this way: There must be two Governments in this House—the Government of the Hon. Mr. Hall, and the Government of the four. The question of their votes having been bought has been gone fully into this evening. Now, at the same rate that it took to buy these four votes, it would take over two millions to get all the twenty members of Auckland. And supposing the Wellington members were to go on the same rate, and if five millions are going to be obtained for this colony, how much of that will be spared for the Middle Island? I do not think at all that it is a good example of my honorable friend of Auckland sitting over there to set to the Maori members. I have heard before regarding the honorable member for Waitemata that the prow of his canoe is very apt to sway from one side to the other. I think the four members alluded to can but compliment the manner in which the Maori member for the East Coast took his departure from those benches, because the grounds upon which he chose to leave that side were very great indeed. He went there upon the understanding that certain wishes which he entertained regarding the Native race were to be fulfilled. And, in consequence of the statements made by the Native Minister on Native affairs, we heard a speech from my honorable colleague, giving his reasons for resigning his seat in the Ministry. In the opinion of the Maori members the grounds which led the honorable member for the Eastern Maori District to do so were very justifiable—namely, the policy the Government proposed with respect to the Native Department. On hearing that speech of the honorable gentleman, my great desire was to be able always to act as independently as he did in quitting those benches. Now, speaking of the four members from Auckland, they did not all go in the course which would be looked upon as honorable, because there are twenty members altogether coming from that province, and why should four of that number, without consulting with their colleagues, act upon any grounds that the others were not acquainted with? The honorable member for Waitemata made certain references to the honorable member for Port Chalmers. Now, it was the member for Waitemata himself who appointed that honorable member to the position he now occupies—leader of the Opposition. He also agreed with the last words of Sir George Grey when he resigned his leadership. I was in the very same Committee, and was listening; and all the members agreed to the resolution concerning Mr. Macandrew. Since that, I learn that these four members have stepped outside that resolution without intimating the fact to their friends, or saying to them, "Friends, let us all go with the Government." Had it been any of us, the Maori members, who had been induced to go

over by money, my friend the honorable member for Newton would have come to me and rebuked me for so doing. Had twenty of those members gone over to the Government, and the honorable member for Newton remained, he himself would have represented twenty. That is why I feel so grieved—that a just and true man like him to whom I am referring should not have intimated to his friends the course he was going to pursue. The other two members—what districts they represent I am not aware—I must say they are very foolish indeed. I shall never cease to congratulate my honorable friend from the East Coast Electoral District on the course he was pleased to pursue, now that I see what action European members have taken in this House. Although in support of my opinion I may fall, I shall still compliment the honorable member for the East Coast Maori Electoral District upon his independent action in leaving a Ministry whose Native policy he could not conscientiously support.

Mr. HUTCHISON. — I think I know what took place at these meetings which have been referred to; and I think, speaking from memory, that what the honorable member for Waitemata stated is perfectly correct, as far as it goes. He omitted to make reference to meetings of a later date than the one to which he first alluded. But while that is so, and while I am positive that he it was who insisted upon the leadership of the honorable member for Port Chalmers—rather against the opinions of some others of the party—I know perfectly well that for a considerable time, and, as I think, naturally enough, the honorable member had felt, as other honorable members did, that this was really a serious state of matters, and that it would be most desirable to arrive at some solution of the difficulty. I am not going to detail any private conversations, even if I had been intrusted with confidences; but I know very well that feelings of that kind were abroad, and I think it only right it should be so stated. We have heard a great deal about perfidy, dishonor, baseness, and so on, but I hope my friends will excuse me for saying that all the mistake that has occurred seems to me to be this—certainly I think it is a grave mistake,—among people who were daily meeting together confidentially, talking about the state of affairs, and talking, I am bound to say, with the view, if possible, of coming to an amicable arrangement of some kind—I say the mistake was, that the honorable member, who was certainly a trusted member at these small conferences, and supposed to be a counsellor and friend, did not give any indication of what he was doing in reference to the Government. There was no indication of the kind given. I refer to the honorable member for Waitemata, because I know nothing of the honorable member for Newton. He was never at any of these meetings, and consequently is not included in anything I am now saying. He may have been perfectly free, for all I know, from the least concealment among his own friends. But when my honorable friends say they are exceedingly glad that these honorable gentlemen have gone over, I say that I am

exceedingly sorry and would be very glad to get them back again. Notwithstanding the alleged dishonor, I should be very glad to condone their offence at once; but I am saying this as one of the humblest members of the party. The only point, therefore, that seems to leave censure upon the honorable member for Waitemata is, that he omitted in any way to let those who were mixed up with him know anything of his intentions. But I am bound to say still further that he has said to me that he failed somehow or other to get to later meetings—that he failed to find the meetings he wished to find. I do not know that that is a sufficient excuse for the honorable member; but it is only right to say he states he had that impression. I think besides that I ought to say this with reference to private conversations: that the distinction the honorable member for the Thames drew is one that ought not to be lost sight of—namely, that private conversations between one gentleman and another of the same party are very different from similar conversations between gentlemen in rival camps, and that the one set of private conversations and the other set of private conversations cannot be put in the same scales and weighed with the same weights. I just wished to say this much, because I think there has been too much of an attempt to lecture to-night. I do not see that there is any good to be gained by it for either side. One thing I am glad to learn: I had no idea until this evening that the Premier was not sound upon the education question; and, if the four Auckland members have done nothing else, they have secured soundness on this particular point. I understand the Government is now committed. It was not before. These four gentlemen have succeeded in getting a written pledge that the Government will not do anything this session, at all events, to interfere with the existing educational system. This famous though very small document contains a distinct pledge that the national system of education will not be disturbed, although the Premier is not in favour of the present secular system. With reference to the liberal measures, I want to say this, in order that I may not be misunderstood in the future: I am in favour of all those liberal measures the Government is pledged to, and about which so much is said; but I say frankly that I do not care anything for these measures unless as a means to an end. I want them simply as leading to far more root-reaching measures. I seek to get the whole power of the country to bear upon something that is to come afterwards. Of course I am speaking entirely for myself. I dare say a great majority will be satisfied if they obtain those liberal measures. I shall not be satisfied with them at all; and that is why I feel that the Government now on those benches is not the Government to carry out those measures and the future root-reaching measures which I think absolutely necessary.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I wish to say a very few words on the subject now under discussion. It seems to me that the members of the Government party do not approve of the action taken by the four honorable members on the other side, for during the whole evening their conduct has

only been defended by the honorable member for Geraldine. As far as I am concerned, the honorable member for Waitemata has not surprised me at all; for in the session of 1876, when I first had the honor of a seat in this House, the honorable gentleman was one of the most bitter opponents of the abolition of the provinces, and nothing disgusted me more than the language he then used towards the gentlemen who were sitting on the Government benches; and yet that very session the honorable member had a commission in his pocket to go and take possession of the Province of Auckland, and oppose the then Superintendent, Sir George Grey. That was one of his actions. I must say he reminds me very much of an actor. The character I would select as most suitable for him would be one in the play of "Othello," for, just as that character betrayed Othello, the honorable gentleman has betrayed his party to-day. I can only say I am exceedingly sorry that, knowing his disposition, I, for one, should have been induced to trust him again; but I was swayed by gentlemen coming from the same district, and intimate personal acquaintances of the honorable gentleman, and, as a majority of those members trusted him—which I regret they were blind enough to do—I trusted him also. Sir, has not that honorable gentleman declared that Sir George Grey should be forced upon the House and the country in spite of all opposition?—and yet he now turns round and says, "Was it at all likely that I was going to follow that gentleman? Had I not a mind of my own, and was I not independent?" Sir, where is the consistency in such conduct? As far as the honorable member for Auckland City West is concerned, I have not much to say about him. Of conceit I think that gentleman has got his share.

HON. MEMBERS.—Order.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Well, Sir, I will not say "conceit;" I will say self-possession. He thinks he is a great factotum, and can get a portfolio at any moment. I should like to see the Government intrust him with a portfolio. I should like to see the House quietly looking on while he holds a portfolio. It will be a sad day for New Zealand when such a state of affairs comes about. With regard to the honorable member for Newton, I must say I feel sadly grieved, for I looked upon that gentleman—and I am sure I am not the only one who did so—with the utmost admiration. When I entered this House, I had read about Mr. Swanson, and I regarded that gentleman with the greatest pride, because I thought, "Here is a man who has raised himself from no doubt a humble state to an independent position, and who has been returned over and over again by a constituency without opposition; and he is an example to others." Therefore my regret was very great to find that in an unguarded moment he had allowed himself to be persuaded by a traitor, who resembles Iago in the play of "Othello." I grieve to think that the honorable gentleman should in an unguarded moment have allowed himself to be swayed by a serpent like that. I am not one of those members who seek office. I am here as an indepen-

dent member, and I am at liberty to vote whichever way I please; but I say that I am exceedingly sorry at what has been exposed on this occasion—that gentlemen for whom I have the highest respect and admiration should go out and hold inducements in the manner they have done; and I feel very much inclined—although it might not be a loss to this House or to my constituents—to retire, considering what has taken place, and that no man can come here and get justice for his constituency unless he sells his soul. I feel so very strongly that I can hardly express my sentiments, and will therefore conclude, only expressing a hope that the honorable member for Newton will yet see his way to retrace his steps.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I just wish to call the attention of the House to one or two facts. It appears now that the honorable member for Waitemata has taken this step in order to remove the difficulty in which the Government stood. The fact is, it really places them in the position he desired to relieve them from, for he leaves a party that would have a working majority of six members, taking with him three others, and that brings matters to the same position that they occupied before. With reference to the honorable gentlemen who have seceded, there is only one on account of whom I feel any regret; and I must say with regard to that honorable gentleman that I am greatly surprised that such an old bird should have been caught with such chaff. Looking at the whole state of affairs, there was one thing the country, and the Government themselves, had a right to say, and that was, that these measures shall be passed. We are all agreed upon that. We come then to the question of education. Well, the only gentleman now on the Ministerial benches who voted on that question last year was the Colonial Treasurer; and I was glad to hear the Premier say that he reserves to himself the right to vote as he pleases. That is honorable of him. So that really the Government have promised nothing. The finances will have to be looked into under any circumstances, and the liberal measures will have to be passed. They have got a promise that the Treasurer shall not vote against them on the education question; but I cannot believe that they could be bought by such a promise as that. As to the adjustment of accounts, nothing could be more ridiculous. The honorable member for Waitemata knows there is nothing to be gained by that. He knows that any man can sit down and make a Statement and turn the accounts round how he likes. There is really nothing in that. The Government are perfectly blameless in making such a promise, for the promise amounts to nothing. The whole thing is a sort of new sensation for the honorable member for Waitemata. He has not had the opportunity of betraying anybody lately, and he took advantage of the first convenient opportunity to indulge his favourite propensity. His conduct reminds me very much of Byron's description of the old women at the siege of Ismail. The honorable member has been coquetting first with one and then with another to get enormous bribes,

and at last he convinced the honorable member for Auckland City West—which was not a difficult operation, I am quite sure—and a great fuss is made about it. But there is not the slightest advantage to be gained if what we have before us formed the whole inducement to go over. There may be something more behind: indeed, I cannot think it possible that an astute financier like the honorable member for Waitemata—who, by the way, went Home in 1863 to raise a loan, and made a great mess of it—and the honorable member for Auckland City West could be bought by a promise of £500,000 for their province. However, they may lay the flattering unction to their souls that they may be sure they will have a stiff fight before they get that money. I was at first alarmed at the promises said to have been made; but, having heard the statement of the Prime Minister, I see nothing in them. If they have been deluded by those promises, all I can say is, that it takes very little to persuade them.

Major ATKINSON.—I may say, in answer to the statement that the £300,000 was included in both tables, that it is not. The answer to the question of the honorable member for Wanganui is, that the whole of the assets are taken up.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 28th October, 1879.

Ngaitahu Half-castes—Paramena te Oneone v. Kinross—Native Expenditure.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

NGAITAHU HALF-CASTES.

Mr. TAIAROA, in moving the motion standing in his name, explained that Mr. Mackay went south, in accordance with an Act passed in 1877, to inquire into this matter, and made certain awards with reference to these half-castes. As soon as the Europeans about there heard what was done, and what lands had been awarded, they objected to the boundaries. A portion of the land was situated on the south side of Otago Harbour, and when they went over to take possession the Europeans would not allow them to do so. Therefore he asked that this return might be laid upon the table, in order that the Council might see exactly what Mr. Mackay did in the matter. The half-castes said, if they did not receive the land awarded them, it would be better to return it to the Europeans and take nothing at all. They did not agree to have land set apart for them on the summits of mountains and hill-tops. He therefore asked the Council to agree to this motion.

Motion made, and question put, "That there be laid upon the table a copy of Mr. Alexander Mackay's report on the issue of Crown grants of land in the Middle Island to certain half-caste Natives of the Ngaitahu Tribe; to-

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gether with the names of the persons to whom he awarded the lands, and the date, acreage, and position of the land, accompanied by a plan or tracing of the same."—(Hon. Mr. Taiaroa.)

Motion agreed to.

PARAMENA TE ONEONE V. KINROSS.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL, in moving the motion standing in his name, said the report of the Standing Orders Committee had been printed and circulated, and, he had no doubt, had been read by honorable gentlemen. Of course the report arrived at the same conclusion as that which was indicated to the House when the Hon. the Speaker gave his opinion upon the case when it was originally submitted to the Council. It was unnecessary for him to quote precedents to the Council, because honorable members were in a position to satisfy themselves upon the point; but there was no doubt whatever that it was absolutely necessary that persons being examined before Parliamentary Committees should be protected from any action being brought against them in consequence of their evidence, unless the leave of Parliament were previously given. He did not, however, for a moment assume that, if the Council thought there was *prima facie* evidence of the committal of perjury, it would so far stand in opposition to its own interest—which was to secure that all evidence given before its Committees should be strictly true—as to refuse permission to the institution of proceedings. But that was not the question before the Council. The question was this: In ignorance, a Maori, advised by an equally ignorant legal adviser, instituted proceedings against a person who had been a witness, charging him with perjury. The action fell through, because the evidence required to prove that an oath was taken at all could not be obtained without the leave of the Council. As the action had fallen to the ground, he thought it only remained to move some resolution upon the subject in order to dispose of it finally, so that by the notice taken of it on this occasion all persons might be warned against a similar mistake for the future. Therefore he moved the motion standing in his name.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That this Council doth concur in the report of the Standing Orders Committee in the case of Paramena te Oneone; but that, as it appears the infringement of parliamentary privilege on the part of Paramena te Oneone and his legal adviser was committed in ignorance, and as the action has been abandoned, it is not necessary, in the opinion of this Council, to take any further steps in the matter."—(Hon. Mr. Mantell.)

The Hon. Captain FRASER could not agree that the legal adviser had acted in ignorance; and he should move, as an amendment, That Mr. Rees be summoned to the bar of this Council for a breach of privilege. Of course the Natives were in the hands of their legal adviser, and the legal adviser had been guilty of a breach of the privileges of the Council.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT said perhaps the honorable member would state what would be the result of summoning this gentleman to the

bar of the Council. It would lead to no good, and would only make the Council ridiculous.

The Hon. Captain FRASER said he would withdraw his amendment.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON could not agree to the report, because he thought it went too far. He did not know that there was any authority for saying that "Parliament will always protect witnesses who give evidence before its Select Committees," and he thought it would be a very dangerous promise to hold forth. What he understood to be the case was this: that Parliament would not allow any proceedings to be taken against witnesses unless the permission of the House was first given. But it appeared by this report that Parliament would give protection to any statement, however false.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is not stated.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON thought it was implied:—

"A reference to parliamentary proceedings and practice shows that Parliament will always protect witnesses who will give evidence before its Select Committees, the principle appearing to be that witnesses giving evidence before Parliamentary Committees are compelled to give evidence whether such evidence may inculpate themselves or not; whereas in ordinary Courts of law such evidence is voluntary, and not compulsory, no witness being compelled to give evidence criminating himself."

What did that mean? He thought the principle was wrongly stated. The principle really was, that Parliament considered itself a body above the Courts of law, and it would not allow the process of those Courts to be invoked without the consent of Parliament first being obtained. But that witnesses were liable for their evidence was shown by the case of Mr. Bridges, in another place, a few years ago, when an Indemnity Act was passed to shield him from the consequences of his evidence. It would be a very dangerous doctrine to promulgate, that witnesses should be completely privileged no matter what evidence they gave. Of course he agreed that people could not take the law into their own hands; but he submitted that, where a *prima facie* case was made out, the Council would always give facilities for punishing wrong-doers. He thought the report in that respect a little misleading, and he hoped the leader of the Council would give his opinion on the subject.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER had only just seen the report, but the impression a glance at it had made upon his mind was, that it went rather further than he had understood precedent to carry it before. Under the circumstances, he would suggest the adjournment of the debate until Thursday, by which time he would look into the question. He would also confer with the Chairman of the Committee as to the authorities upon which the recommendation had been made, and then, if the Council did not approve of the report, it could be referred back to the Committee for further consideration. He moved, That the debate be adjourned until Thursday.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE, speaking to the question of adjournment, said that, if the

Hon. the Attorney-General conferred with the Chairman of the Committee with a view to getting over the difficulty, no doubt a very valuable guide to the Council would be the result. He was not prepared to accept any report which would have the effect of offering a premium for perjury before the Council's Committees, and, unless some arrangement could be made under which this would be avoided, he would not accept any ambiguous resolution on the subject.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE thought there would be some advantage in postponing the debate. It would give honorable members an opportunity of carefully reading through the report of the Committee, and coming to some intelligent apprehension of it. The Committee never stated in their report, as the Hon. Mr. Wilson and the Hon. Colonel Whitmore seemed to think they did, that the Parliament maintained the right of protecting, under all circumstances, persons who had wilfully and deliberately perjured themselves. They simply stated what was undoubtedly in accordance with parliamentary practice, and a decision at which they only arrived after fully considering parliamentary precedents,—that Parliament would always protect witnesses who gave evidence before Select Committees, whether that evidence was calculated to inculpate them or not. Of course the inference was—and the intention of the Committee was to convey that idea—that Parliament would only protect witnesses when they told the truth, and they did not regard as evidence necessarily to be protected wilful and deliberate perversion of the truth; and the Committee further went on to state the reasons that had influenced the Parliament of Great Britain, whose precedent they were following on this occasion, in arriving at that conclusion—namely, that, whereas in the ordinary Courts of law such evidence was voluntary and not compulsory, no witness being compelled to give evidence criminating himself, in the case of Parliamentary Committees the witnesses were compelled to give evidence whether they liked it or not, and whether such evidence might tend to criminate themselves or not. Honorable members, on more carefully looking through the report of the Committee, would see that it did not relate in the most remote way to that other question which had been raised of the protection which was to be afforded to persons who had given evidence not inculpating themselves, but evidence by which they perjured themselves.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said the Committee were quite clear upon the point, and it really was the principal one they had to consider—namely, that any action taken against a witness who had given evidence before the Council, or before a Committee of the Council, was a breach of privilege if such action was taken without the consent of the Council: that was clearly what the report proposed to establish, and it was a matter which the public should clearly understand. But if honorable members would inquire as fully into the matter as the Committee had done, they would find that, if they followed the precedent of the House of Commons, they would go very considerably further, and quite the length which the Hon.

Mr. Wilson deprecated; for there was at least one notable instance on record where the House of Commons protected a witness who, though they might not be quite satisfied he had done so, yet they had strong grounds for supposing, had committed perjury in giving evidence before them. The Council, he thought, would not desire to follow that precedent, but would insist on maintaining its privilege of debarring any person from taking action without the consent of the Council against a witness for evidence given before the Council or a Committee of the Council.

The Hon. the SPEAKER, before putting the question, would draw the attention of the Council to Standing Order No. 279, which stated, "If it shall appear that any person has given false evidence in any case before the Council or any Committee thereof, the Council will proceed with the utmost severity against such offender." It was difficult to conceive that the Committee on Standing Orders would go in violation of that Standing Order, and declare in their report that Parliament should protect all and sundry offenders.

Debate adjourned.

NATIVE EXPENDITURE.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he had tabled it for this simple reason: The Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell had moved that his own name should be discharged from the Committee, and, in opposing that, he (Colonel Whitmore) pointed out to the Council that he thought they could with very great difficulty dispense with the services of a gentleman who was so well qualified to hold a seat on the Committee, and he also said that he (Colonel Whitmore) believed the honorable gentleman's motion had been made under a misapprehension of something which had taken place in the Committee. He thought the honorable gentleman who was then sitting next to him, and with whom he had a private conversation on the subject, would corroborate his statement that he then said he was glad they had come to the resolution they had, and that throughout the whole discussion in Committee he had entirely agreed with the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell. But his honorable friend Dr. Pollen, who was sitting below him, translated his remarks to mean that he was giving considerable opposition to that honorable gentleman in the Committee, and rose in his place and told him that the wish of the Council was —

The Hon. the SPEAKER hoped the honorable member would not refer to a former debate in pointed terms.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said it was almost impossible to explain what he meant without doing so. But he would put it hypothetically, and would assume that he had heard somewhere that it was the wish of the Council that Sir F. Dillon Bell should remain on the Committee, and that any member who in any way obstructed or discussed matters with him had better be removed from the Committee. He heard casually, and he heard at the time, that several honorable gentlemen in the Council had concurred in that view. Well, he (Colonel Whit-

more) was perfectly prepared to accept that view. He thought there could be no more competent Commissioner to investigate this matter than Sir F. Dillon Bell, and if it were competent for the Council to place the honorable gentleman in that position he should be delighted. But if he (Colonel Whitmore) was to serve on the same Committee with that honorable gentleman or with any other honorable gentleman, he must have the right of free discussion in the Committee, and if he differed from the honorable gentleman he must be able to express his point of difference, and he would not render himself liable to be told that difference meant obstruction of the honorable gentleman. Consequently he thought it was only due to himself to ask to be relieved from serving on the Committee. It happened, oddly enough, that he had entirely agreed with the honorable gentleman in principle up to the present; but as the principle he had mentioned appeared to have been laid down, as regarded this Committee at all events, he must ask to be relieved. Should the Council grant his request he would suggest the name of another honorable gentleman who was as competent to represent the interests of the late Government as he was, and more harmony might then be reached—at all events in the mind of the Hon. Dr. Pollen. He would like to add to his motion a few words to the effect that the name of the Hon. Mr. Wilson be substituted for his own.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the name of the Hon. Colonel Whitmore be discharged from the Native Expenditure Committee."—(*Hon. Colonel Whitmore.*)

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES hoped his honorable and gallant friend would reconsider this matter. Perhaps the best course would be for the Council to negative the motion. He thought some misapprehension must have led to the action first taken by the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, and subsequently by the Hon. Colonel Whitmore. He did not happen to be present at the meeting of the Committee at which some little feeling was shown; but he was confident that the occurrence must have been accidental and casual, and was not at all likely to recur. He was satisfied that the Hon. Colonel Whitmore would be of great service to the Committee in its investigation, and he should regret very much if the Council agreed to discharge the honorable gentleman from the Committee. If he would not withdraw the motion, he (Mr. Menzies) would vote against it.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE must take exception to some remarks which fell from the honorable and gallant gentleman who moved this motion. He stated that the Council took up the view that any person who obstructed or discussed matters with the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell should be removed from the Committee. Now, the Council never expressed any opinion whatever on that subject. One honorable gentleman, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, gave notice of his intention to introduce a motion with a view, as he said, to the establishment of harmony within the Committee, but he never took any further action in the matter, and the Council neither one way nor the other expressed an opinion on the subject; and it was

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to give a false impression of what the views of the Council were—

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE rose to a point of order. He was debarred from explaining himself on this subject, and was stopped exactly at this very point, and he would like to ask whether the honorable gentleman was in order in proceeding to refer to the subject.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said he was only referring to what the honorable gentleman had said himself.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said a clearer instance of the inconvenience of referring to a former debate could not be adduced than the present. The honorable and gallant gentleman had introduced a reference to a former debate, and now his statements were being rebutted. They had got improperly on the floor of the Council, and it was always very difficult to stop an honorable member from referring to what had already been said in the same debate. He hoped the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse would not pursue his criticism of what had been said concerning a previous debate any more than he could help; but he was unable to stop the honorable gentleman if he did not go further than to refer to so much as was first brought forward by the Hon. Colonel Whitmore. He trusted the honorable gentleman would not go further than to take up such remarks as the Hon. Colonel Whitmore had introduced.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said his intention was not to refer to a previous discussion. He was commenting upon remarks which fell from the honorable and gallant gentleman subsequently to his being called to order, in reference to the statement of the Hon. Dr. Pollen. After the honorable gentleman had referred to what the Hon. Dr. Pollen had stated, he went on and added that, the Council seeming to be of opinion that there should not be freedom of discussion in the Committee, he was anxious to be relieved from serving on it. Now, at no time whatever had the Council, with reference either to this or any other Committee, desired that there should be other than the most full and free discussion; and if the honorable gentleman said that he wished to retire from this Committee because the Council desired that there should not be freedom of discussion upon it, then he placed the other members of the Committee in a false position. He put them in the position of wishing to remain upon a Committee in which there was not to be the fullest and freest discussion—in other words, to be upon a Committee which should be a packed one. Now, he (Mr. Waterhouse) would be opposed equally with the honorable gentleman himself to being a member of any Committee appointed upon such terms as those; and if this Committee was to be at all packed in its character—if it was to be a Committee not characterized by the fullest and freest discussion—he, for one, would request to be relieved from serving upon it. But he believed it was the desire of the Council, as it was the desire of the members on the Committee, that there should be the fullest and the freest discussion, and for that reason he felt he could with consistency and with honor to himself con-

tinue to serve upon that Committee. If the honorable gentleman's words had conveyed an impression other than that which he wished them to convey, then there could be no objection on his part to continuing to serve upon the Committee. He (Mr. Waterhouse) joined with other honorable members in hoping that the honorable and gallant gentleman would continue to serve on the Committee, for he himself must have seen—indeed, he had already admitted—that the course of procedure adopted on the recommendation of the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell was one which generally met with his concurrence. He (Mr. Waterhouse) would be very glad to see all parties represented on this Committee, and, although it was in no way whatever a party Committee, yet if the honorable and gallant gentleman thought its proceedings were intended or were calculated to injure the party with which he was connected, it would seem desirable that he should be there to watch over its interests.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER could not help taking exception to the mode in which the honorable and gallant gentleman had raised this debate. He had said that, if there was not to be freedom of discussion in the Committee, he for one would not like to serve upon it. Now, that opened up the whole question, and, if it were not so very undesirable, he (Mr. Miller) would consider himself justified in stating what actually did happen. He had not the slightest intention, however, of doing anything of the kind. He refrained from taking such a course during the last debate for very obvious reasons. The honorable member withdrew the expressions, and there was an end of it. But he wished to point out this: that the honorable and gallant gentleman was begging the question on the present occasion, and he had no right to assume that, because a certain unpleasantness arose with regard to what he said, therefore there was not freedom of discussion in the Committee. There was a great deal of difference between objecting to an expression used by a member of a Committee, and freedom of discussion not being allowed. He thought the honorable gentleman would be very wrong to retire from the Committee, as his presence there was a kind of guarantee of his continued loyalty to his colleagues, which he (Mr. Miller) commended him for, and was desirable on many other grounds. But, if he did retire, it must be thoroughly understood that he must not hereafter object to the action of the Committee on the ground that he would not be present because there was not freedom of discussion. The honorable gentleman was perfectly well aware that all that was past was now forgotten, and that the Committee would proceed as if this unfortunate occurrence had never arisen; and he believed the honorable gentleman was more satisfied now in his own mind that the direction of the inquiry which was likely to take place was not of that kind which he appeared—he (Mr. Miller) would not say to have dreaded, but—to have anticipated. He hoped the honorable gentleman would not retire from the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL thought it was very much to be regretted that motions of this

sort had become lately of so frequent occurrence in the Council; and he must say that he was almost tempted to go and do likewise, for he noticed that no sooner did an honorable gentleman move that his name be removed from a Committee than every member in the Council who was disposed to say anything at all got up and praised the honorable gentleman in a manner which must be highly satisfactory to his feelings; and he supposed they would adopt the usual course upon this occasion. He certainly would not consent to the withdrawal of this motion, as he desired to have the pleasure of giving an emphatic negative to it, and that would be his tribute to the value of the Hon. Colonel Whitmore's services on the Committee. He was not joking at all on that point. He was quite sure the honorable gentleman's services on any Committee were extremely valuable: he paid attention to the subject, and he had been gifted by Providence with an amount of energy and ability which enabled him to deal with the subject. But he hoped that, in future, when they were dissatisfied with a Committee honorable members would withdraw quietly from it, and, unless they were very much in want of a compliment, that they would not bring the question of their withdrawal from the Committee before the Council. He would give his utmost opposition to the motion of the honorable gentleman.

The Hon. Mr. P. A. BUCKLEY thought a great deal too much had been made of a little accident that took place in the Committee. He happened to be present on the occasion, and he certainly did not understand the honorable and gallant gentleman to make any reflection upon any member of the Committee. He thought it would be a great pity if the motion were allowed to pass, because a Committee of this kind ought to have among its members a gentleman who was likely to bring so much experience to bear upon the important questions with which it would have to deal as the Hon. Colonel Whitmore possessed. Following the example of the Hon. Mr. Miller, he would refrain from referring to anything which had taken place in the Committee, and would only repeat that, in his opinion, too much had been made of a merely casual observation.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE regretted that the Hon. Mr. Miller did not make the corroboration which he had requested, because he thought there was a misconception about the whole matter.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER remarked that he had stated the honorable gentleman had withdrawn the expression.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said the honorable gentleman mistook entirely the meaning of the allusion. He (Colonel Whitmore) made no reference to what took place in the Committee as being his reason for withdrawing. It was in consequence of remarks made in the Council that he considered freedom of discussion in the Committee was interfered with; and, as far as he was personally concerned, he would not sit on that Committee after those remarks. He did not make the motion for any such purpose as that

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alluded to by the Hon. Mr. Mantell; he hoped he was not at all likely to be influenced by such a consideration. But, after the remarks which had been made, he could only sit on that Committee under restraint for the future, and would not feel free, or able to take a satisfactory course, if he sat there. He had the usual alternative open to a member when he found his position in a Committee inconvenient; and therefore the Council could of course do what it pleased in regard to his motion. He did ask to be allowed to substitute another honorable gentleman's name; but, as his motion did not appear to be acceptable to honorable gentlemen, he supposed it would be negatived; and, if that were the case, either this last proposal must be made over again, or there would be no representative of the late Government on the Committee. He did not think it followed that other honorable gentlemen were not to sit on the Committee if they chose, after what he had said. It was only in reference to himself that the remark was made. Possibly other honorable gentlemen would find their position more tolerable than would be the case with him.

Motion negatived.

The Council adjourned at half-past three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 28th October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Reading—Christchurch City—Auckland Members—Want of Confidence—Supply—Land Bill—Auckland Loans Consolidation Bill—Slaughterhouses Bill—Napier and Meane Recreation Ground Bill—Joint-Stock Companies Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Riverton Drill-shed Reserves Bill, Hamilton Hall Site Bill, Qualification of Electors Bill, Registration of Electors Bill, Maori Representation Bill, Regulation of Elections Bill, Corrupt Practices Prevention Bill, Election Petitions Bill, Electoral Acts Repeal Bill, Duties on Deceased Persons' Estates Bill.

SECOND READING.

Napier Church Land Trust Bill.

CHRISTCHURCH CITY.

Mr. FULTON.—I beg to bring up the report of the Committee appointed to report upon the City of Christchurch election petition. I move that it be read.

The CLERK read the report, which is as follows:—

"The Committee, to whom the petition of the Hon. Edward Richardson, C.M.G., against the return of the Hon. Sir George Grey, K.C.B., as member for the City of Christchurch Electoral District, in the Province of Canterbury, was referred, beg to report as follows:—

"1. That His Excellency the Governor did, by Proclamation, fix the 17th day of September, 1879, as the day on which all writs should be returned, and for the meeting of Parliament; and in the writs issued the Returning Officers were required to return the said writs to the Clerk of the Writs on or before the 17th day of September, 1879.

"2. That, on the 17th day of August, 1879, a writ was issued for the election of two members for the Electoral District of Thames, and was made returnable on or before the 17th day of September, 1879.

"3. That the nomination of candidates was appointed by the Returning Officer to take place on the 2nd day of September, 1879; and at such nomination Sir George Grey, K.C.B., was declared to be duly elected as one of the members for the said district.

"4. That the 23rd section of 'The Regulation of Elections Act, 1870,' provides that the names of the persons so declared to be elected shall be indorsed on the writ by the Returning Officer as the persons duly elected in pursuance thereof, and he shall make a return accordingly.

"5. That, on the 2nd day of September, 1879, the Returning Officer indorsed on the said writ the name of Sir George Grey, K.C.B., as one of the persons duly elected, and returned the same to the Clerk of the Writs, who received the same on the 6th day of September, 1879.

"6. That, in pursuance of a writ dated the 18th day of August, 1879, duly issued, the nomination for the City of Christchurch Electoral District took place on the 1st day of September, 1879, and the election on the 10th day of September, 1879; and Sir George Grey, K.C.B., was, among others, declared to be elected.

"7. That, on the 11th day of September, 1879, the Returning Officer indorsed the name, among others, of Sir George Grey, K.C.B., on the said writ, and returned the same to the Clerk of the Writs, who received the same on the 12th day of September, 1879.

"The Committee, having read the petition and heard the evidence adduced, and counsel for petitioner and the sitting member, do hereby determine,—

"1. That the Hon. Sir George Grey, K.C.B., was not duly elected for Christchurch at the last general election of members of the New Zealand House of Representatives.

"2. That the Hon. Edward Richardson, C.M.G., was duly elected, and ought to have been returned as a member in this present House of Representatives for the City of Christchurch.

"JAMES FULTON, Chairman.

"25th October, 1879."

Mr. FULTON. — In terms of clause 39 of "The Election Petitions Act, 1858," I have been instructed by the Committee to bring up the following resolution adopted by the Committee, and lay it on the table:—

"I am instructed by this Committee to report to the House that the following resolution was by them unanimously adopted, viz.,—

"That this Committee is of opinion that the provisions of the present law for the trial of elec-

tion petitions are unsatisfactory, and require amendment.

"JAMES FULTON, Chairman.

"25th October, 1879."

Mr. SPEAKER.—The House will now, in order to give effect to clause 38 of "The Elections Petitions Act, 1858," have to order that the report brought up be entered on the Journals of the House, and to give the necessary directions for carrying into effect the determination of the Committee.

Mr. TOLE.—I beg to move, That the report and minutes of evidence and proceedings do lie on the table until next sitting-day, to enable the House to learn whether or not the Committee have conducted the investigation of the allegations of the petition regularly and in accordance with law.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think that would be in order. The Act says that the determination of the Committee shall be final between the parties to all intents and purposes.

Mr. TOLE.—The words of the Act are specific simply with regard to the parties, and not to the House. The law does not say that the decision of the Committee shall be binding upon the House. The proceedings of the Committee may have been entirely in violation of the law under which they sat. They may not have conducted the proceedings properly in any respect: indeed, I have reason to believe that the provisions of the Act have not been complied with in this case—in fact, that there has been a violation of the law. I will point out one particular instance. I have reason to believe that the voting of the Committee, which is the most important part of their deliberations next to the actual decision, was not conducted in accordance with law. When the vote was called for, I understand one member of the Committee did not vote. He was allowed to be absent for an interval of an hour or so, and when he returned he recorded his vote, all the other members of the Committee having voted previously. I will now draw attention to section 33 of "The Election Petitions Act, 1858," which says, "Whenever a Committee is divided upon any question, the names of the members voting in the affirmative and of those voting in the negative shall be separately entered on the minutes of the Committee." Now, the dictum on this point is clear, as regards parliamentary usage, that the question shall be determined in the Committee in the same manner in which it would be determined in the House to which the Committee belongs. That is in accordance with the principle laid down in May's Parliamentary Practice, of 1863, when the election petitions at Home were conducted in the same manner as they are under our own Elections Petitions Act. Then, again, our own practice, according to Standing Order 143, is that every member present, when the question is put, shall be required to vote. Standing Order 183 also, which regulates the conduct of the proceedings in Committee, says,—

"In the event of any division taking place in any Select Committee, the question proposed, the

name of the proposer, and the respective votes thereupon of each member present, are to be entered on the minutes of evidence."

They are to be entered on the minutes at the time. Then, pursuing this point further, there is a distinct dictum on the subject laid down in May's Parliamentary Practice, which is that "every member is obliged to vote upon each question whenever a division arises." So that no member of the Committee should be allowed to leave the room after the division is called for, to stay away for an hour or two, and then come back and record his vote. The whole weight and determination of an important decision such as this being centred upon his vote, that vote was liable—I do not say that anything of the sort was attempted in this case, but it was liable—to be swayed by all sorts of influences. There is this other important fact to be considered: that all the members of the Committee including the Chairman, had voted, and the decision of the Committee became dependent upon the vote of one of the ordinary members of the Committee, and who was allowed to go at large; so that, after the Chairman had given his vote, an ordinary member came in and decided the whole question. I think the whole proceeding is unprecedented. Who ever heard of a member of any ordinary Committee ever leaving the room and coming back to record his vote, or of a jurymen leaving the Courts of the country, after the close of the other proceedings, and returning to give his vote? If a report like this is to be confirmed in the face of such facts, it is a serious thing for the House, for the country, and for the representatives of the people. I therefore submit that I am in order in moving the motion which I have already read to the House.

Mr. HISLOP.—In speaking to the point of order, as to whether this motion can be put or not, there is another matter I wish to bring under your notice, Sir; and that is this: When a matter is sent to the Petitions Committee, I submit that they should find whether or not certain matters have taken place which will disqualify a person from taking his seat in this House, or that some matter shall be laid before the Committee which will show that the return has been properly or improperly made. I submit that the findings of the Committee show clearly that no grounds were disclosed which would disqualify Sir George Grey. It is surely not in the power of the Committee to find certain facts, and then, whether these facts are matters of disqualification or not, to report that an honorable member of this House is disqualified. The facts, as contained in the report laid on the table, clearly show that nothing has transpired, so far as the findings are concerned, which disqualify the honorable gentleman. They only show a state of matters to have existed in regard to the Christchurch election which has very often existed at Home, and which existed here in the year 1876, when a Committee found, on a similar petition, that the facts did not disqualify a person for being returned for a constituency. That report has been affirmed by the House, and therefore I submit that the findings of this Committee are

Mr. Tole

not such as to justify it in reporting that Sir George Grey has been disqualified.

Mr. SPEAKER.—My mind is very clear upon the question that the decision of this Committee is, by law, final, and cannot be revised or reversed by the House. As to the question of the adjournment of the Committee before voting on a motion, I would point out that the Act of 1862, amending "The Election Petitions Act, 1858," gives the Committee full power to regulate its own proceedings, and to adjourn from time to time, if it so please, before coming to a final decision.

Mr. TOLE.—I can understand the Committee, at the beginning of their proceedings, laying down a certain course of procedure: but that is not the question.

Mr. FULTON.—Rising to the point of order, it may save discussion if I be allowed to say that the statements of the honorable gentleman are not in accordance with the facts.

Mr. TOLE.—I am assured that they are in accordance with fact. I was only replying to what you, Sir, said as to the Committee having power to regulate its own proceedings. I take it, that means that as soon as they take their seats to deliberate they can lay down a certain course of procedure. But, after the proceedings are commenced, and when a division is called for on any question, the Committee cannot then and immediately lay down fresh rules for the occasion, and say, "We will allow So-and-so to go home to luncheon and come back again afterwards and vote." The law in all such cases is imperative and uniform. Every person present when the division is called for is "obliged" to vote upon each question as it arises. As I am informed, a question was put in this Committee, a division was called for, and, the names of the other members of the Committee having been taken down, one honorable member asked for an hour to consider how he should vote.

Mr. FULTON.—These are the statements which are not in accordance with the facts.

Mr. TOLE.—All I can say in reply to that is, that an honorable member of the Committee has informed me as I have stated.

Mr. MOORHOUSE.—If I might be allowed to make a short statement, it may perhaps relieve the mind of the honorable member for Eden of a misapprehension. What he has stated are not the facts of the case. The question was not put to the Committee. All the honorable members of the Committee except one had stated their opinions, and when that one was called upon to do so he said he would like further time for reflection. The question was never put until after the adjournment, and the votes were not recorded as the honorable gentleman states.

Mr. TOLE.—All I can say is, I was told by a member of the Committee that he had recorded his vote before lunch and another gentleman came back afterwards and recorded his vote.

Mr. HISLOP.—If it be in order, I will move, That the minutes of proceedings of the Committee be read.

Minutes of proceedings read.

Mr. HALL.—I am not sorry that the honorable gentleman requested that the minutes of the

proceedings of the Committee should be read, because I take it that the only possible ground on which—in the face of the terms of the Act of 1858—the House can abstain from immediately doing that which the law prescribes it shall do, is, that there was something in the proceedings themselves so grossly and absolutely irregular as to invalidate those proceedings. Failing that, I take it the law is distinct and imperative. It says that, “the House, on the same being reported to them, shall order such report to be entered on their Journal, and shall give the necessary directions for confirming or altering the return.” Therefore, if the decision of the Committee has been arrived at without any such gross irregularity as would involve the upsetting of its proceedings, I take it the House has no power to go behind the report, which the law declares shall be final. I trust, therefore, we shall have no further interference with the law being given effect to; but that we shall proceed, as we have done on all previous occasions, to carry out the law.

Mr. HISLOP.—I accept the challenge of the honorable gentleman with regard to the irregularity of the proceedings of the Committee. The first irregularity I submit is this: It does not appear from the minutes that the witnesses examined were examined on oath, as required by the law; secondly, there was no evidence before the Committee that the Hon. Mr. Richardson was a candidate at the last election for the Electoral District of Christchurch City, or that he was a voter upon the electoral roll for that district. The omission of evidence on those two points shows that the proceedings of the Committee were conducted with great irregularity. Another matter is, that the minutes do not show whether the Committee entered into the consideration of whether the statements in the petition were sufficient to disqualify a person occupying the position which Sir George Grey occupied from being a member of this House. It seems absurd that there should be entered upon the records of this House two decisions of sworn Committees of this House, one in 1876, declaring that matters which would disqualify a person at Home would not disqualify him here, and another one now, stating that they would disqualify him. Under those circumstances, I submit it would be a very bad precedent for the House to adopt this report. I therefore move, on the grounds I have stated, That inasmuch as it appears from the proceedings of the Election Petition Committee that the evidence before such Committee was not on oath, and that there was no evidence that the Hon. Mr. Richardson was an elector on an electoral roll in force in the Colony of New Zealand, or was nominated or contested the election for the Electoral District of the City of Christchurch, and as the facts stated in the petition do not disclose any ground for disqualifying Sir George Grey, this House declines to ratify the report, and orders the petition to be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot put that question. It is clearly laid down by the law that the report of the Committee is final; and consequently the House cannot revise it. The only question I

can put is, That the report be entered on the Journals, and the determination of the Committee be carried into effect.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I would venture to put another case to you. I argue nothing for myself, but what I have to say affects others. At the time I stood for Christchurch the law of the land was declared—that is, that according to precedent I was justified in the course I took. That was the declared law at the time: declared by this House—the highest Legislature in the colony. And, having stood, 1,350 persons voted for me, and they certainly voted under the law existing at that time. I apprehend the House ought not to disqualify them, and prevent them from returning such members as they like, even if it is determined that henceforth such a system shall not prevail. Then, if it is determined that I am not the sitting member, let the House determine that there shall be a new election, so that 1,350 electors shall not be disfranchised. They acted in conformity with the law at the time—they followed out the course Parliament prescribed as the existing law; and I say that to disfranchise them absolutely by the decision of a Committee would be one of the most unjust acts ever perpetrated. That is the point on which I rest; that is the point which I wish the House to consider; and I do not believe the House will think it just or right to inflict an injury of that kind upon 1,350 innocent persons, who were absolutely obeying the law at the time they gave their votes. The Act says that the determination of the Committee shall be final between the parties—that is, between the person who prosecutes the petition and myself; but it does not say that the decision of the Committee is to be final as to punishment—the disfranchisement—of a large number of electors. Then there is another point which is really worth considering—that is, whether, justly, this petition ought not to have been presented before fourteen days had expired. Now, I apprehend the result of that may be that it may be impossible now, supposing Mr. Richardson is declared to be the sitting member, to bring a petition against him for bribery, if it be thought proper so to do. In this particular case, there was no reason why the petition should not have been presented the first day after Parliament met—there was no necessity to get up evidence; and I think it would be most unjust, under the circumstances, that a large proportion of the electors of Christchurch, who obeyed the law of the land at the time, should lose the right of choosing a member of Parliament. They committed no crime; they broke no law; they committed no offence: wherefore inflict so heavy and great a punishment upon them? I trust the House will consider that.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. FULTON.—I am instructed by the City of Christchurch Election Petition Committee to lay on the table of the House a resolution adopted by that Committee, and to move that it be read.

Resolution read as follows: “That this Committee is of opinion that the provisions of the

present law respecting election petitions are unsatisfactory, and require amendment."

Mr. G. S. Cooper, Clerk of Writs, being in attendance, was directed by Mr. SPEAKER to alter the writ of election for Christchurch City by substituting for the name of Sir George Grey the name of the Hon. E. Richardson; which was accordingly done.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I feel it my duty to rise to a question of privilege. It is this: Whether it is possible in this way to virtually disfranchise a large number of electors. I submit that this is an unheard-of case, and is contrary to every precedent. Any one who looks at the precedents which decide English elections and which settle these points, will see that it is absolutely unlawful to do that which the House is now doing.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member is not in order in bringing up this question as a matter of privilege. The House has ordered that the report of the Committee be entered upon the Journals; and that covers the giving effect to the determination of the Committee. I shall call on Mr. Richardson to come up and be sworn in.

Sir G. GREY.—I move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The member reported by the Committee to be entitled to the Christchurch seat must be allowed an opportunity of appearing in order to be sworn.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON then took the oath and his seat for Christchurch City.

Sir G. GREY.—I rise to another question of privilege. I wish to know whether it is not the House that should order the writ to be altered, and not the Speaker. The House has not ordered the alteration to be made.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The House has ordered the report to be entered upon the Journals, and it is my duty to give effect to what is ordered to be entered on the Journals.

Sir G. GREY.—The House gives the necessary direction for altering the writ, and not the Speaker. I submit that point for your consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I believe the course I have pursued is the correct course to adopt.

Sir G. GREY.—I would ask you to look at the law. It is a most important point; and I think, if you will patiently read the law before pronouncing this decision, you will see that I am absolutely right in what I say. This is perhaps the most important thing that has ever been done.

Mr. SPEAKER.—With all deference to the honorable gentleman, I must say that the decision of the Committee is final. The House expects me to see that the law is carried out. It is well known that the House cannot override the decision of the Committee, and that the House has divested itself of the determination of this matter by intrusting a Committee with adjudicating on the question. In this procedure both parties agreed by nominating their respective Committeemen, and taking part in striking the Committee.

Mr. Fulton

AUCKLAND MEMBERS.

Mr. HALL, in reply to the order of the House made on a previous day—"That any correspondence that has passed between the Government and any Auckland members regarding the terms on which they would vote with the Government, be laid before this House; or, if any terms or arrangements for the same purpose have been concluded with any Auckland members, that the same should be communicated to this House"—laid on the table a communication, signed "G. S. Cooper, Under Secretary," stating that there was no such correspondence on record.

The question was put, "That the paper do lie on the table."

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I understand the question to be, That this paper do now lie on the table. I contend, Sir, that that paper is no compliance with the order of the House. It is simply an evasion. I contend that a correspondence has taken place, and that there is a document in existence; and I say we have a right to insist upon that document being produced. I am told that it is in the possession of the honorable member for Newton; that it bears signatures to it; and I trust the Government will not attempt to evade the production of this document, as it has already done. Will the Premier consent to produce it?

Mr. HALL.—The Premier will consent to produce any Government correspondence.

Sir G. GREY.—What can be a Government correspondence more than this? I appeal to the House whether there can be any correspondence more completely Government correspondence than this—correspondence, I am told, initiated by the Premier himself. He knows whether that is the case or not. I am told, further, that it is signed by four other gentlemen. I say the House has a right to have that document produced, and if it is not produced a gross breach of privilege has been committed, and we should at once proceed to consider that breach of privilege. The orders of the House have not been obeyed. There must be some reason for keeping this document back; but, if the Government decline to produce it, I think the honorable member for Newton will feel it to be a duty to himself, to the House, and to the country to produce it, and by so doing to expose what I must call an evasion of the Government, the like of which is absolutely unknown. I am sure the Premier would have done much better by standing up frankly and saying, "I produce it." I trust the honorable member for Newton will produce it.

Mr. MURRAY.—May I ask, will the paper laid on the table be printed?

Mr. HAMLIN.—Sir, I rise to ask whether I should be in order in moving an amendment to the question you have put to the House. The amendment will be as follows: "That, in order to give effect to the resolution arrived at by this House on last sitting-day, in regard to the production of papers relating to the alleged compact made with certain members from the Auckland Provincial District, a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the matter, with power to call for persons and papers, and to take evi-

dence on oath ; to report within seven days ; five to be a quorum. Such Committee to consist of Mr. Finn, Mr. J. B. Fisher, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Johnston, Captain Kenny, Mr. Pyke, Captain Russell, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Whyte, and the mover." Shall I be in order, Sir, in moving that amendment?

Mr. SPEAKER. — That amendment is perfectly in order.

Mr. HAMLIN.—Sir, I am led to move—

Mr. MURRAY.—Should not the honorable member give notice?

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The question is, "That this paper be laid on the table;" to which the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. Hamlin) is about to move an amendment.

Mr. HAMLIN.—I am led to move this amendment inasmuch as it is known that certain papers have passed between certain members from the Provincial District of Auckland and the gentlemen who at present occupy the Treasury benches. The paper which they have laid on the table is simply an attempt at stifling the information which we desire to have. Sir, if the Government has made—and there is no doubt about it—a compact with certain honorable gentlemen from the Province of Auckland, surely they are not ashamed to allow the House to inquire into the matter. On the other hand, I cannot for one moment suppose that any of the four honorable gentlemen who hold the papers will be ashamed to lay them before this Committee. Sir, there are, in the first place, twenty gentlemen supposed to represent that part of the colony in this House, and I hold it to be as much their right to have an insight into these papers as the four honorable gentlemen who have forsaken their party have had; for, had the electors of that district thought four gentlemen were sufficient to represent them within the walls of this House, they would not have asked the other sixteen to come here. But they have been chosen from all parts because they were known to possess a knowledge of the requirements of their several and respective districts. And yet, forsooth, we find here a Government who can make a certain arrangement with the four, thereby utterly obliterating the influence or the foresight of the other sixteen members. I look at it, Sir, with some amount of alarm. If this system is to be encouraged, if the Government can negotiate with only a few members of this House to secure their own seats on those benches, thereby stifling a fair and legitimate discussion of the rights of that part of the colony, then I say a gross injustice will be done to the Parliament, and I, for one, coming from that particular district, will not hear of such a thing without protesting against it. I think I have moved a very fair Committee, and I trust that the Government and my honorable friends implicated in this matter or a party to the contract will be prepared to support us in carrying this resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is the rule to give notice of the names of members of Committees, but the other terms of the amendment can be submitted to the vote of the House.

Mr. MURRAY.—I object to it.

Mr. WHITAKER.—Do I understand you to say that it is necessary to give notice of the names of the Committee?

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is the rule to give notice of the names.

Mr. WHITAKER. — Then I object to the names of the Committee being put without notice.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—It is a question of privilege. It has arisen suddenly. We may be quite wrong in our contention, but we believe that the Government is keeping back papers which this House has ordered.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I will submit the amendment, omitting the names. The honorable member for Franklin can give notice that he will, tomorrow, move the appointment of certain honorable members to form the Committee.

Mr. HALL.—Sir, if the honorable member thinks there is any memorandum, or other writing, which either the Government or any honorable member has reason to be ashamed of, he is entirely mistaken. It is not on that ground that I oppose and shall vote against this amendment. But, in the first place, if not absolutely out of order, it is certainly against the spirit of the Standing Orders, that a motion of this kind should be introduced practically without notice. It is practically an attempt to take the House by surprise, and that is my first ground for objecting to it. My second ground of objection is, that it is asking for information which this House has no right to demand. If the motion is carried, I shall move the addition of some such words as these: "That the Committee shall not confine its inquiry to the subject mentioned in the resolution, but shall extend it to all private conversations, all understandings, and all agreements which any honorable member of this House has had with this Government, or any preceding Government." Let us have out everything.

Mr. PYKE.—And future Government.

Mr. HALL.—And not only that, Sir; but every telegram, whether paid for by members of the Government or not, by which an attempt was made to influence the late elections. That is the logical conclusion to which we must come, if this motion is to be carried, and it is a manifest absurdity: that we should inquire into any private conversation—strictly private, not official—and which the House has no right to ask for. Sir, anything in the shape of public correspondence the House has a right to ask for. Any private conversation or argument used by one honorable member to another to induce him to vote in this way or in that way is strictly private. As to the argument of the honorable member for Dunstan, perhaps it would not be convenient that all arguments used to induce honorable members to vote in a particular direction should be produced.

Mr. PYKE.—I think it would be very useful to produce them.

Mr. HALL.—I think there might be very awkward disclosures.

Mr. PYKE.—If the honorable member means to insinuate anything against myself by that remark, I beg to give it the most unqualified denial.

Mr. HALL.—I do not mean to implicate the honorable member for Dunstan in any manner whatever. He has had large political experience in this and a neighbouring colony, and circumstances must have come under his notice—I do not say the honorable gentleman was affected by them—which it would be unfair and improper to make public, because they were private. On this occasion, I ask the House not to commit the manifest absurdity of passing a resolution which would call upon a Committee to investigate private conversations and private arrangements, which the House cannot go into. When the policy of the Government is laid before the country, the House will see whether the Government has held out any hopes or given any undertakings in any way contrary to public policy, in any way discreditable to the Government or to any honorable members, or which involve any abuse by them of their power as Ministers of the Crown. The substance of the arrangement has been stated very fully by the honorable member for Waitemata. The House is practically in possession of the information called for, and nothing more would be obtained if the Committee were appointed. It would be a Committee which is absolutely unprecedented. Nothing of the kind was ever proposed before, and I feel confident the House will refuse to appoint it.

Captain RUSSELL.—I would point out that a somewhat similar question arose recently, on the subject of some letters which passed, or were supposed to have passed, between the honorable member for the Thames and Mr. Alfred Cox, and the House on that occasion decided that it was absolutely impossible they should be recognized by this House at all. I would point out the absurdity of appointing a Committee of this kind. This Committee might tell me to produce any private document; but the Committee would be absolutely unable to compel me to produce it. I would like to know whether myself or any other honorable member of this House would produce a private document. I might have a private document in my pocket; it would be impossible to take it from me under any circumstances; and this Committee would simply be a waste of time. On this ground I oppose it; but, should the motion for a Committee be carried, and my name be placed on the Committee, I certainly say at once that I will take no part in any Committee attempting to get at any private letters.

Mr. SWANSON.—We have heard a great deal about a certain document. I wrote the thing myself, and it came back. In fact, an honorable member of this House saw it before it went, and I promised one or two others that they should see it. It came back marked "Confidential." I may state what took place. The Government resisted the production of the paper. I sent over Mr. Richmond to say, "Do not resist on my account. I do not care a single penny if it is stuck upon the Speaker's chair;" and he then wanted me to vote against its production; but I said I should do nothing of the sort, because there was nothing in it that I was ashamed of. I shall read it to the House.

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. Pyke

Hon. MEMBERS.—Read it.

Mr. SWANSON.—I will not read it, unless the honorable gentleman gives his permission, neither will I be forced to do it. If the members of this House are able to make me produce it, they are different people from what I take them to be. There is nothing in it that anybody need be ashamed of; and as to that "rot" about money, and the promise of money, there was not half a farthing promised or asked for secretly. Everything that has to be done is to be done in this House, and the only stipulation is that I shall get nothing for myself.

Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Then why should it be confidential?

Mr. SWANSON.—That is not your affair. It is not confidential as far as I am concerned.

Mr. MOSS.—I do not think anybody would suppose that the honorable member for Newton would make any bargain for himself; but I believe that in this case he has been entrapped.

Mr. HALL.—He said he wrote the document himself.

Mr. MOSS.—I did not say that the Premier entrapped him; but I must say that I have always felt that the honorable member for Newton had been entrapped. I do not say by whom, or how; but his action in this matter is contrary to his usual proceedings. However, it was satisfactory to hear the honorable gentleman stand up and say that he was prepared to produce this document. His conduct in this is fair and open; but how are we to reconcile that statement with the facts that we do know? In the first place, the existence of the document has been denied by the Premier.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman is entirely misrepresenting me. I said that the House had heard from the honorable member for Waitemata that there was no correspondence. That statement is strictly accurate and true.

Mr. MOSS.—The honorable gentleman also said that if there was any correspondence he would not produce it.

Mr. HALL.—I said that there was a memorandum, but no correspondence. The honorable member for Waitemata said there was "no correspondence, but the following is the substance of the understanding arrived at." I say so, again.

Mr. STEWART.—The distinct impression the Premier created was that there was no writing or correspondence.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman is entirely misrepresenting me. I never made use of any such words.

Mr. STEWART.—The honorable gentleman said that if there was anything in writing he would not produce it.

Mr. MOSS.—I know that practically the Premier said there was no correspondence, and the honorable member for Newton says there is a correspondence.

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. MOSS.—The honorable member for Newton absolutely says there is a correspondence—

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. MOSS.—A confidential correspondence—it may not be an official correspondence. But,

Sir, it is extraordinary how it can be maintained for one moment that honorable gentlemen sitting on those benches can hold confidential and private communications with individual members in order to attach men to their party, and yet say that they are doing it in their private capacities—

Mr. SUTTON.—Oh!

Mr. MOSS.—The honorable member for Napier says "Oh." I have no doubt he sees the mistake that has been made. He ought to have been employed as whip in the matter. It is because of his principals' dealing in the matter that the whole thing has got into the fire. I feel that the honorable member for Newton and the other three Auckland members are in an altogether false position with reference to their party and with reference to the remaining representatives from Auckland Province. They have made us appear false to our constituents, because it will seem that those four members are the only members who have the interests of their constituents at heart. Why did they not come to us and say, "We have an opportunity now of doing good to the province fairly and openly"? Why did they not give us the opportunity of judging of the nature of these proposals? I think myself, as one of the colleagues of these gentlemen, that such proceedings are subversive of all good government, and subversive of the purity of this Parliament. I hope that honorable members who declaim against transactions of an infinitely milder character than this will not cover it up, but that we shall have it fully laid before the House. If there is nothing in it, we shall all be delighted, but, if there is something in it, we should know what that something means.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not think the question is, whether there is any document, nor whether that document contains anything that honorable members have a right to object to. It is a question whether, as a matter of precedent, this House is to have dragged before it communications that may take place between members of Parliament that are not of an official character. We have seen in this debate that such a course would be attended with very great inconvenience. But the question has gone further than that. The Premier has said that there is nothing in the communication that he is at all ashamed of; the honorable member for Newton has said that there is nothing in it that the House need not know; and there are honorable members who still discredit those statements, and would have the House take a course which would form a most inconvenient precedent. On the ground that it would form a precedent that would degrade this House and make it an arena into which private communications would be brought for party purposes, I am satisfied that the honorable member for Newton would not be doing right by complying with the request to produce the document.

Mr. BROWN.—I must say that I am very much surprised at the Premier refusing to allow the honorable member for Newton to read the correspondence. The honorable member for Newton put it to the honorable gentleman whether the correspondence should be read, and he re-

fused to give his permission, and one of his colleagues also said No. Is there anything in it to be ashamed of?

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. BROWN.—Then why object to its being read?

Mr. W. J. HURST.—May I correct the honorable member? Absolutely I have never seen any correspondence in reference to the matter; neither have I ever seen any memorandum. I will make the narrative as complete as the honorable gentleman desires. The honorable member for Newton came to me with something written on half a sheet of an Order Paper, and said he thought it was a very reasonable request, which the Government ought to comply with, and that, if they agreed, that was the course we ought to adopt. The honorable member for Waitemata has explained the terms of the document the honorable member for Newton wrote on that occasion. I have never seen it myself. I do complain that honorable members should fly in the face of this explanation, and make statements which have no foundation in fact.

Mr. BROWN.—I challenge the honorable gentleman to say whether he said "No," when the honorable member for Newton proposed to read the document.

Mr. W. J. HURST.—Yes, I said "No."

Mr. BROWN.—Then what had you to be ashamed of?

Mr. W. J. HURST.—I adopt the principle laid down by the honorable member for Napier (Captain Russell) and by the Minister of Lands. Where is this to lead, if every private conversation is to be brought up in this House?

Mr. BROWN.—I know there is a correspondence, and, if the Ministry are not ashamed of it, why not read the letter? When the Premier said there was no correspondence, he had in his hand the very document prepared by the honorable member for Newton.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman is stating what is absolutely contrary to fact.

Mr. SWANSON.—I assure the House that is not a fact. The document was never in the hands of the Government at all. But I had no wish to keep it back: if Sir George Grey had asked me to produce it, it would have been read there and then. It would have been done in an instant.

Mr. BROWN.—I ask the honorable member for Newton whether he did not express his surprise when the Premier said the other evening that he had no correspondence.

Mr. SWANSON.—If anybody says that, he is labouring under a gross mistake. The thing is simply impossible.

Mr. BROWN.—We have the admission that there is a correspondence—a letter or a memorandum, or whatever it may be called, from the Premier, and another letter or memorandum from one of the four Auckland members, both of which are in the possession of one of the four. That honorable gentleman is willing to produce the document to the House, if the Premier will allow him. That is a fact.

Mr. SWANSON.—This is a little too strong altogether. The four members came to an

agreement amongst themselves, and put it in writing. Are we to be called upon to produce that document? Why, the Government never saw it, and do not know what it contains. I may tell the honorable member, however, that the conditions were, that we were all to support the Government, and if one failed all were free; but that agreement was never in the hands of the Government. I can state that positively, and that the Government knew nothing about it. There is only one paper, and there is nothing to lay on the table. This much, however, I may say, and I do not care who knows it, and who sees it: Everything is to be done aboveboard, and across this table; and the first condition is, that these liberal measures which have been so much talked about shall be gone on with, and got out of the road as speedily as possible. That is what the House ought to be doing now, instead of wasting time over a discussion about this wretched piece of paper. The document is in my pocket now, and out of that it shall not come without the consent of all the persons concerned.

Mr. BROWN.—I say the honorable gentleman has borne out everything I said—namely, that a correspondence does exist; and this House is entitled to have it, because it deals with a public matter. I think every member of this House, even the Premier himself, will agree that there should be no private and confidential correspondence between him and private members with regard to public matters. Therefore the honorable member for Newton should be allowed to lay this paper on the table.

Mr. SWANSON.—I certainly shall not. The House may pass as many resolutions as it likes, but it will not compel me to give that document up, or to burn it either, because I want to keep it myself, in case I should have to make use of it hereafter.

Mr. W. J. HURST.—I do not want to prolong this discussion, but I should like to know whence the earnest desire for the production of this document springs. Does it spring from members from other portions of the colony? No; it springs from Auckland members alone; and it is painful to think that those who talk so much about wasting time are the very gentlemen who are wasting time in discussing the production of a document of which they have already got an explanation.—(No, no.)—I would take the word of the honorable member for Newton upon that point, in preference to the word of many other people. I say the honorable member for Waitemata gave an explanation of the document. It was written, I believe, by the honorable member for Newton, and I do not know that it has ever gone out of his possession. I am very sorry to see this loss of time. It is a most painful sight to see this House turned into a sort of chamber of inquisitorial jurisdiction, merely to discover something which the honorable member for Tuaepeka imagines to exist, but which does not. It is most unwise and indecent on the part of this House to take such a course. I contend that the view set forth by the honorable member for Newton, and which was indorsed by the Premier, is correct, that anything that is to be done under this pre-

cious document must come before the House and receive the consent of the House. Why, then, does the honorable member for Tuaepeka desire to see this document? I think the whole proceeding is most unseemly.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—I trust this resolution will be passed; and the reason I wish it is, that I like to see all things done in this House, as the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. W. J. Hurst) says, decently. I like to see the business of the country conducted fairly and aboveboard. I like to see the representatives of the people doing their business in an honest and straightforward manner. I like to see members who may think it right to band themselves together in order to obtain justice for their district act fairly in the light of day and aboveboard; and I do not like to see them acting secretly and hiding their actions. Exception has been taken to the word "correspondence," and it has been said that there is no correspondence on this subject. I think the Premier is perfectly correct when he says that there is no correspondence, in the usual sense of the word; but I must say, if a document written by one man, and initialled by another as agreeing with its contents, does not come under the term "correspondence" it comes very close to it. It was very hard to get it out of Ministers that there was any document at all. It had to be dragged from the honorable gentleman—the Premier—the other evening that a memorandum did exist; and I think those who admit that such is the case ought to be the first to desire that that document should have the fullest publicity given to it. I appreciate the stand taken up by the honorable member for Newton when he says he will not produce the document until he has the assent of the parties to it; and that assent I trust that the Premier will give. When the Premier tells us that this is an arrangement, or conversation, or understanding entered into between private members. I think he makes a mistake. He should rather have said that it is an arrangement between members representing certain districts and the Government for the time being. This document ought to be produced, because it will be a memorable document in the future, and a needful document in order to show whether the promises contained in it have been carried out. The honorable member for Auckland City West says this is an indecent proceeding on our part. I trust he is not going to lecture us upon decency, because the standard of political decency which he sets an example of is one which not many decent men will care to follow. I ask, with him, where is this to end? Is it to end in the representatives of every district in the colony entering into private arrangements with the Government to get what they think right for their districts? Is it to end in the representatives of every district entering into agreements with the Government by which they are to get some money for their districts, and in return such members are to give their votes to the Minister? Is that where this sort of thing is to lead us? I apprehend it is; and I understand from a very reliable source that already the members of another provincial dis-

Mr. Swanson

trict are about to enter into some sort of similar arrangement with the Government if they can do so. I have no doubt that all that suavity which characterizes the honorable gentlemen who occupy the Government benches will be exhausted in getting them to believe that they will obtain what they say is due to them. I think it would have been better if this document had been produced without any talk: but it appears that the Government have now dropped all that suavity and courtesy which used to distinguish them when meeting the House, have assumed the position of leaders of the House, which they ought to have taken up long ago, and refuse to produce this paper. I think it is well this Committee should be appointed, because, in addition to this document, there are other matters that could be brought forward in connection with the same subject, and in connection with other arrangements or memoranda. The Premier thinks the duties of the Committee should extend further; and I think both sides of the House will agree with him that, if any good can be gained thereby, the powers of the Committee should be extended. I do not want to shield a wrong act done by any Government; and, if the honorable gentleman can bring any case of corruption against the previous Government, in all fairness let him put his finger upon it, and bring out the truth, so that these things may be stopped. What we say now is, that a bargain has been made in a hidden and covert manner—a manner which, I submit with the greatest respect, the forms of this House do not allow—a manner which the parliamentary usages of this country do not allow—a covert bargain between the Government and individual members of the House, with respect to matters affecting the finances of the country: matters which ought always to be brought openly before the House itself, and which even in this case will still have to come before the House, not on account of the desire of the honorable gentlemen who are parties to this deed, but because the forms of the House require it to be done. The whole thing resolves itself into this: that a bargain has been made with Ministers; and, by means of that bargain, people have been gained over to their side who otherwise would not have gone there. I trust that the Premier and Colonial Treasurer will take the statement of claims of the Auckland District from the hands of the honorable member for Newton, and that that honorable gentleman will frame the balance-sheet; and I do not doubt he will do it justly and fairly: but I maintain that the northern part of this colony has a full title to the justice now asked to be extended to it, without any of these hidden and covert acts and bargains. I say the House ought to affirm the appointment of this Committee, and ought to add to its powers the power of going into any transactions by the present Government or by the previous Government. The Premier ought certainly to assent to that. He told the honorable member for Dunstan the other evening that there was a certain argument used by him—by the Premier.

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—Those were your words. I took them down myself.

Mr. HALL.—The honorable gentleman is mistaken. I certainly did not use those words, and did not intend that such an impression should be conveyed.

Mr. SPEIGHT.—All I can say is, the honorable gentleman has used very forcible arguments in this matter in order to obtain votes; and I can only hope that, as he has now gained the votes of these four gentlemen, he will keep the promises he has made to the district.

Mr. STEWART.—Sir, there are two points involved in this question which I regard as of the greatest importance as affecting the purity and independence of members of this House. The first is, whether four honorable gentlemen have leagued together for the purpose of accomplishing a common object; and the second is, whether those parties have entered into a compact with the Government of the day for the purpose of giving effect to the object for which they have banded together. It is not at all a question whether that compact has been entered into in writing. That I regard as altogether a secondary consideration. Whether it be in writing or not, I submit that, if a distinct agreement has been entered into by four members of the Opposition that in consideration of their four votes the Government will use all its influence to secure that a certain sum of money shall be voted in a particular direction, that is a fraud upon this House. If anything of that kind has been done, I contend it is most improper. Something has been said about this document being confidential. If so, then I say that is the strongest evidence of fraud. The very secrecy and confidential nature of the correspondence shows it is something that will not stand the light of day—something to be given effect to without other members of the House being aware of the arrangement. I submit that it is absurd to say that the honorable member for Newton should not produce this document because the word “Confidential” is written across it. I admit that, in the case of ordinary communications between private gentlemen, it would be dishonorable and improper to use communications of that kind; but is it to be said that the Government of the day can enter into secret and improper arrangements? I do not say that that is the case here, but I am simply assuming it to be the case. Is it to be said that the Government of the day can enter into secret, improper, and fraudulent arrangements—

Mr. MURRAY.—I rise to a point of order. Is the word “fraudulent” in order, as applied to any transaction?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think the honorable member is out of order.

Mr. STEWART.—If it is to be said that an arrangement of that kind can be concealed by merely using the word “confidential,” it will not tend to anything like pure and honest administration. The very use of the word “confidential” shows clearly that the communication is something of an improper nature. With regard to the statement that the document will not be produced under any order of the House, I believe

that the honorable member for Newton has a greater respect for the authority of the House and for himself than to allow himself to attempt to carry out any such threat. He is a member of this House, and, whether he is so or not, he is subject to the jurisdiction of the House, and so is every document he has, unless it is privileged in the strictly legal sense, and not in accordance with the mere whim of a member in possession of a document. Something has been said by the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. W. J. Hurst) to the effect that there is an earnest desire to proceed with the business of this House. It is all very well for those honorable gentlemen to hurry on the business when it suits themselves, but, as the representative of another part of the colony, I have a right to see that the business is carried on with something like fair-play. Because a certain number of honorable gentlemen like to come to an agreement for an improper purpose, is that purpose to be given effect to, and everything else to be thrown aside? An arrangement of that kind may be suitable to those honorable gentlemen, but may be very unsuitable and unjust to others not concerned in it. What has struck me throughout this discussion is the apparent disinclination on the part of the Government to produce this correspondence or allow it to be used. I think that is a strong indication that they are ashamed of something they have done. If not, why attempt to conceal it? I am merely judging from appearances. The honorable member for Newton is apparently willing that it should be produced; but the Government, it seems, are unwilling that it should be produced. With regard to the statement of the Premier that there was nothing in writing—

Mr. HALL.—I beg again to correct the honorable gentleman. I never said so. I ask whether it is in order for the honorable member to repeat an assertion of that kind, after it has been distinctly contradicted.

Mr. STEWART.—I was about to explain that I did not mean to charge the Premier with stating so. He states that he did not say there was nothing in writing on the subject. I believe that, strictly speaking, he is correct; but the impression unquestionably left on my own mind, and on the mind of nearly every other member of this House, was that there was nothing in writing, because the Premier said if there was anything in writing the Government would not produce it.

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. STEWART.—I accept the honorable gentleman's denial. Summarizing the position of matters, we have here a Government who have entered into some arrangement with four members of this House who were in opposition, which arrangement the Government wish to conceal from the House. That I think will be admitted. Does the honorable gentleman deny that?

Mr. HALL.—The honorable member for Waitemata has stated what it is.

Mr. STEWART.—Does the honorable member wish to conceal it?

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. STEWART.—Then the honorable member is willing that it should be produced?

Mr. Stewart

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. STEWART.—It is very difficult to know what the Government are prepared to do. They are willing to produce it now, but they will vote against its production, just as they did the other day when they went over to the honorable member for Newton and said to him, "You must vote against it;" but when the honorable member for Newton said "No, I wish to produce it," there was a regular stampede to this side of the House, which swamped the division against themselves. I think it would be consulting the dignity of the House and the honor of honorable members on the Government benches if they produced this document or sanctioned its production, because I am certain that, whether the document is produced or not, so long as its contents are unknown to the House, the great majority of us must labour under the impression that there is something improper in the transaction—something of which those honorable gentlemen are afraid, and something of which this House would feel ashamed. I trust that the resolution will be agreed to, and that the House will be satisfied when the document is produced.

Mr. PYKE.—I have observed with feelings of pleasure and satisfaction that the Premier has a great affection for me, and I can assure him that that feeling is reciprocal. I have a great affection for him. Perhaps my affection for him is greater than his affection for me. To prove it, I will give him some good advice, if he will consent to take it. My advice is this: If the document is so harmless—if there is nothing in it—it may be divulged to the world. Why does he not respond to the efforts of the House to get a sight of it? I take everything he stated to us for granted. I believe it is a most innocent document. I do not believe there is anything in it of which any gentleman need be ashamed, or anything which Ministers need be ashamed to disclose; and I think it is most desirable, in the interests of the country and to save the time of the House, that it should be produced. Harmony would then be restored at once. I do not think men can deal with a million of the public money and write "Confidential" across the document. Why refuse to produce this innocent, harmless, non-injurious document, as it is represented to be? Cannot the Premier see that the production of this document would at once restore peace to this House? It would satisfy the minds of the discontented Auckland members, whose honor is endangered. It would remove the aspersions cast on the honorable member for Auckland City West, although it would not remove them from the honorable member for Waitemata, because he will never be able to wipe away the aspersions from his name as long as he lives. I know the honorable member for Newton would be only too glad to produce the document. Why does not the Premier allow him to do so? Why resist this, and force the House to go to a division on the subject? I really would like some explanation. I cannot understand why a document which implicates nobody, which does not commit the Government to any expenditure of public money, as I am informed by the honorable

gentleman opposite, should be so secretly withheld, and marked "Confidential," so as to prevent one of the most honorable men in this House from divulging the contents. As to the word "correspondence,"—supposing only one document passed between the honorable members and the Government, I take it that that would be correspondence. I will conclude by asking the Premier, out of my love for him—out of my desire to improve his position in this House as an honest politician—I implore him, I beseech him to produce this document and put an end to the trouble.

Mr. WHITAKER.—In the old days the early Christians found that their bitterest persecutors were those who deserted the faith. I find that, whenever any question is raised in this House having reference to political morality, we may expect to see the honorable member for Dunedin City and the honorable member for Dunstan upon their feet. I am not in order, I presume, in moving an amendment upon an amendment; but, if I were, I would like to move that all correspondence or verbal communications between the late Government and those two honorable members having reference to their votes on one side or another should be laid on the table. No doubt we should then have satisfactory reasons for the political somersaults those honorable gentlemen have recently performed. My main object in speaking is to draw attention to the fact that those honorable gentlemen are always upon their feet when any of those questions come before the House: I do not know why, except for the reason I first stated.

Mr. PYKE.—I have spoken less than any other member in this House.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I did not say that the honorable member spoke more than anybody else. I only said that we might have some explanation of the honorable member's somersaults.

Mr. PYKE.—I call the honorable member to order. He does not know what he is speaking about. I have made no somersault in this House. I have only done as the Minister of Lands did. He voted against the Atkinson Government, and within ten days he voted against the Grey Government.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I fail to see that two wrongs make a right. I do not know what the Minister of Lands did, but I know what the honorable member for Dunstan did. If the honorable member for Dunstan did not physically turn a somersault on the floor of the House, he did so morally in the division lobbies. I think, if it were ordered that all correspondence in relation to political circumstances during the last few years should be laid on the table, the honorable member for the Thames and the honorable member for Tuaepeka would find themselves in an exceedingly disagreeable position. Further than that, I think the honorable member for the Thames would walk into one lobby and the honorable member for Tuaepeka into the other. Honorable members have no right to drag those communications before the House. Is it to be said that Ministers are to have no private communications—that everything they do and say is to be

dragged on to the floor of the House? If so, I think the documents which have passed between honorable gentlemen on the other side would be very instructive.

Mr. TOLE.—The honorable gentleman who has just sat down has endeavoured to laugh us out of Court; and no doubt his jests and gestures may have afforded a little amusement to honorable members: but this is not an occasion for merriment. I consider that a very great scandal has been committed, and I say that the Government are entirely to blame for that scandal. The honorable member for Newton, as I understand, was willing to lay the document on the table had it not been marked "Confidential;" but the Government, so as to make it a sealed book, a sealed compact—in order to make it a secret arrangement—wrote "Confidential" upon it, so that it might be locked up from public knowledge; thereby showing that there must be something wrong in the document, otherwise that word would not be put upon it. An honorable member says that the honorable member for Waitemata has already given us the whole history of it. If that be so, then it is no longer confidential. I say, let us have the document; let the whole matter come out. The whole population demands that this should be done. I feel myself very much humiliated indeed in the position I occupy as an Auckland member. I could not have acted as the honorable members referred to have done. I should have held myself bound, by a compact of integrity to the people who had sent me here, not to betray my allegiance to the other honorable members from my district. The idea would never have entered my mind to make any arrangement of the kind. On that ground I think a very degrading thing indeed has been done by four Auckland members entering into a secret and improper arrangement, which is one of the elements in the crime, and the other element is that the Government should have been a party to it. I can quite conceive that the Government are the people who have done this—that the overture made came not quite so much from these four gentlemen as from the Government themselves. I have recently been reading some of the speeches made during the Eden election—not my speeches, I may say—I was reading a speech made by my opponent, in which there is this paragraph: Speaking of the expenditure of the colony, he said,—

"There has been an expenditure of £9,000,000. I think it must be admitted on all sides that we have not had our share to the extent of at least £1,000,000."

That is something like the statement made by Mr. McCosh Clark in Auckland, of which we have heard. The gentleman from whose speech I am now quoting is now a member of the Government:—

"When we get the new loan I should propose that this difference should be equalized. We should go into a calculation, and show what we were entitled to receive upon the basis of these data, and have ascertained what we were fairly entitled to. We should insist upon having it. I will make one to that, if you return me."

He was not returned; I am here in his stead. That honorable gentleman is now a member of the Government in the other branch of the Legislature, and it seems to me likely that the proposals or overtures made by the Government have emanated from him. I do not wish to speak disrespectfully of him here, any more than I did outside this House; but I believe that he is the gentleman who has induced these four members to leave their allegiance to their party, and destroy the confidence which was reposed in them. I say an injustice has been done to the people of Auckland. Those honorable gentlemen knew the great anxiety which the people of Auckland felt in the elections, and especially the organization called the Central Committee—they knew the trouble that Committee took to return members pledged to act together. While people would be in their beds, those gentlemen would be going over the rolls; and the great desire was, that representatives should be sent down to support the then Government and to get justice for Auckland. They would have considered it a great scandal for these four gentlemen to recede from the rest of their party, and make and accept overtures of a discreditable kind. A good deal might be said; but I shall stop. The honorable member for Waitemata says he has ambition. Well, I am young, and I have made great sacrifices to get into this House, pecuniarily and otherwise. I have made great sacrifices for my party and for great principles; but I should consider that my character was for ever blasted had I entered into a corrupt arrangement of this kind. I have an ambition; but I am content that that ambition should be satisfied by climbing, and not by creeping.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think it incumbent upon honorable members representing other parts of the colony to express an opinion, as well as the members from Auckland. I do not blame honorable gentlemen from Auckland who have adhered to their pledges; but I will simply give my opinion of those honorable gentlemen who belonged to our party, who turned away from us and entered into this compact. A number of honorable members, speaking of these honorable gentlemen, commenced by saying that they felt sorry. I do not feel at all sorry. I feel an aversion for these gentlemen, because I consider they have violated that which every honorable member in this House and every man should always hold sacred—namely, their word of honor. The honorable member for Cheviot says, "Oh!" Perhaps there is no honor about that honorable gentleman. The Government come in for their share of the blame in this case. Well, I believe if a jury were sitting on this case the opinion would be something like the opinion given by the foreman of a jury on one occasion. Foreman: "Well, gentlemen, 'twon't be no good for we to go talkin'. 'Tis clear we can't possible convince one another that way so as for to agree on our verdict. Six for guilty and 'arf-a-dozen for not guilty. 'Adn't we best toss up?" It appears to me, as far as the Government is concerned, and as far as the late Government is concerned, if we are to believe all we hear,

Mr. Tole

it is simply a question of "toss up." But there is this much to be said of the preceding Government—and it is a strong point: that if they had made such promises and granted such concessions, even without reducing them to writing, they would have been a Government to-day. When the question was put to the honorable member at the head of the Government the other day on the subject, his answer was one of equivocation. If he had said there was a memorandum, and that it had been initiated by himself; that, so far as the public purse was concerned, it was conserved; that, if Auckland in the past suffered an injustice, justice would be now done, and that that had been reduced to writing—if he had adopted that plan we should not be debating this question now. It was only when the division was called for, and when that honorable gentleman went and asked the political renegades of Auckland how they were going to vote, and they told him, "We are going to vote for the resolution"—it was only then that the Government changed their minds, and went into the lobby with our party. The honorable member for Newton said he was willing to produce the paper—that, so far as he was concerned, there was nothing to keep back, and that he would vote for the production of the paper. I do not see that we are likely to gain any benefit by keeping up this debate. The honorable member for Newton is ready to produce the paper—if honorable members chose to read it he would show it to them privately; but, until the Government withdrew the word "confidential," he was not at liberty to produce it in the House. Such being the case, the only thing we can do is to give expression to our opinion on the subject. I will say this much—and I do not think I am committing a breach of faith in saying so: that there is something in that document which was not mentioned by the honorable member for Waitemata. There is something in it about giving money for school-buildings or for schools in Auckland. Well, if money is to be devoted to schools and school-buildings in the Auckland District—if the people of Auckland have been neglected in that respect and require more schools, there is no harm in that. There is no breach of faith whatever in my saying that this is one of the questions referred to in this memorandum. There is a large population on the West Coast. They have also been neglected as regards schools and money for school-buildings, and are exceptionally situated. We are told that promises have been made, and that the Government intend to do something with regard to Auckland. I would insist upon the Government having a table compiled showing the amount of money that has been spent in each provincial district, and also showing what revenue has been derived from each of those districts. When we get that, we shall all have a fair start. Let us all start upon a fair footing. I do not want Auckland to occupy the position of the parson of a congregation a hundred miles from Liverpool. A vessel had been wrecked, and when the news came that the wreckage was washed ashore the church congregation made a movement in the direction of the shore. The parson

from the pulpit said, "Stop. I command you to stop." Very well, the people did stop: and when the parson got to the door, he said, "Now, follow your pastor," and commenced running down the churchyard before they could get a start. That is the start the people of Auckland will have. If we do not put a stop to this sort of thing we shall be in the position of the parson and his flock. Let us all have a fair start. When we have this table compiled—and I hope the Government will have it compiled—let the money be divided *pro rata* in each provincial district that has been in any way neglected. If that is done we shall then have an equitable arrangement. We shall also have this fact: that it was the four Auckland members who brought it about. Through them it could be said we have got a document which forced the Government and the representatives of the people to do justice alike to each provincial district in the colony. I am not on this occasion speaking on this subject as a party question. In what I am saying, whether for or against the Government, I am saying what I believe to be correct. What I have against the Government is this fact: Before going into this question, we heard from the Government that they were proposing to do away with the miners' franchise at the end of this year. We had held up to us what the honorable member for Geraldine conceived to be a beautiful picture; but I hope it will not be looked upon by other colonies in the same light. I have always considered that rats were vermin, and I believe they are looked upon as vermin by every person; but we had a picture drawn the other night that political rats were conducive to good government in New Zealand. We had a picture drawn of these four honorable gentlemen who broke their pledges to their party and betrayed them, having done a good thing for the colony, and were told that in days to come their names would be revered; we should find monuments erected to their memory in the large centres of population and in the Auckland District particularly. With all his eloquence, and with all the arguments he used, there is nothing in my mind so despicable as for gentlemen, without a cause and without some good reason, to desert their party, or simply sell their party, as these Auckland members have done. No argument will convince me that that was right. We also know that one portion of the compact was—it cannot be denied—that one Auckland member of this House was to have a seat on those benches. That was one portion of the compact. Now, who is the man? I believe the honorable member for Newton strictly insisted on himself being exempted, and we heard from the honorable member for Waitemata that he would not take it. Like the Cornishman who took a piece of meat home, he said, "I will not have it; my wife can't eat it: give it away." That is generally spoken of as the Cornishman's gift; and this offer of a portfolio was treated in the same way. The honorable member for Waitemata would not take it, and the Government dare not give it to the honorable member for Auckland City West; I am sure they will not dare to give it to him. There will be

an end to all good government if portfolios are going to be held up as a bait to any gentlemen who will betray their party or their constituency. I hope the Hall Government will not go so far as that, at any rate—that they will not create any of those four honorable gentlemen members of the Government. A great deal was said about the honorable member for Geraldine and the honorable member for Dunstan; but I say at once I should have left my party if either of these gentlemen had been given seats on the Treasury benches. That is the position I take up. It is neither right nor sound in principle that Governments should be so constituted. Now, I ask, is it fair that for four weeks the government of the country should be held back and the business of the House stopped—that these gentlemen should have been assisting us to stop proceedings until we got a Government on those benches which we considered would meet with the support of Liberals and of two-thirds of the people of the country—and all for such a result? They were with us, they acted with us, they voted with us, and were in our confidence to the very end—until victory was actually within our grasp—and then we found they had left us without any cause. From the moment I gave my last vote with the Grey Ministry I was a free man; yet not one of those gentlemen who have left us did not do the same as I did. They came to the caucuses, entered into the discussions, and not only talked, but held up their hands in favour of the adoption of certain courses; agreed that conferences should be kept strictly secret; entered into the compact by which, as it were, we gave up our individual independence—trusted our votes into the hands of certain members who were to carry out what were our wishes, each of whom held five votes of the party: in fact they acted with us fully up to the last moment. Well, I regret, for one, that I did on that occasion place my vote in the hands of those honorable gentlemen, especially when one of them was a man who would betray us. I will take care never to do it again. I much regret that these gentlemen should have placed themselves in the position they have done. Had they come to us two or three weeks ago, and said, "Well, we fail to see that it is any use fighting for or with you any longer: we are very sorry, but for the good of Auckland and the rest of New Zealand we must leave your party," I should have said they crossed the floor as honorable men. But what do we find? The honorable member for Marsden I certainly excuse to a great extent. The honorable gentleman was elected to support Sir George Grey; and Sir George Grey told us the other night that, when his Government were beaten that honorable gentleman went to him and asked to be relieved from his obligation, saying, "I have come to ask what is my position now. I was returned to support you; but now am I not free?" Sir George—

Captain COLBECK.—As a matter of personal explanation, I may say I was not returned to support Sir George Grey. I was returned to support Sir George Grey in a particular vote of want of confidence.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honorable gentleman has

borne out every word I said. If he came here to support Sir George Grey on a no-confidence vote, he was returned to support Sir George Grey.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am surprised to hear honorable gentlemen say "No, no." However, he asked his position, and Sir George Grey replied, "You are free. You have done what you agreed to do, and are therefore now at liberty to use your own judgment." How did he use his judgment? He remained one of the party still. He acted with the party, and, if the division-lists are looked up, it will be seen that he voted with the party when our leader raised party questions. He was, in fact, one of the party to all intents and purposes, and I regret the course he has taken. As regards the honorable member for Newton, perhaps it is presumptuous for me, a young member of the House, to criticise what has been done by so old a member as himself; but he will pardon me if I say that I excuse him because it is the first time—it is the first fall from a very high pedestal. He has been an honorable member of this House for many years, he has earned for himself a well-known name and a good name, and, this being his first fall, we must simply gild it over: therefore, I gild over the action of the honorable member for Newton. Now I come to the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. W. J. Hurst), and I must say, at the outset, that his action has not shaken my opinion of him in the least. Wherever I find a gentleman of an oily tongue and a plausible manner, I watch him closely. I have watched the honorable member closely from first to last, and I have made up my mind about him. From the beginning to the end he was enthusiastic in the support of our party: indeed, he went further than any other honorable member did. I believe he went so far as to enlist the fair sex in our behalf: I am told that one of the fair sex on our side went to the wife of another honorable member who was said to be wavering, and endeavoured to work for us—and this is the way the Parliament of New Zealand and the government of the country is being carried on. The honorable member for Grey and Bell spoke about the female franchise being granted. Well, when I find a single individual going in for that, or engaged in running after the fair sex, I generally think it is a serious case, and I am inclined to think, if the help of the fair sex is being enlisted on any side, it is a serious case with that side. The honorable gentleman who sought to employ the fair sex on our side has deceived that sex as well as our side. The fact of the matter is this: that a portfolio, having been held out at the distance, has tempted the honorable gentleman. There is no excuse for the honorable gentleman. Every one must remember the plausible speech he made when seconding the Address in Reply; and we cannot forget the speech he made last Thursday night week, when he challenged the Government to bring on the want-of-confidence debate—when he told the Government they were stopping the business of the country, and that they should leave those benches at once, even though the lasso had to be used: yet we find that honorable gentleman, within

two or three days thereafter, as soon as ever the honorable member for Waitemata held up a portfolio in the distance, saying he will "speak to Mr. Swanson" about deserting us, "because there is something in it." Of course there was something in it, although we find that though a document was read to him he knows nothing about it. Is there nothing in it about the honorable member for Auckland City West having a seat on those benches? I should have asked that question when he was speaking, had I not been afraid that I should have been ruled out of order. Sir, he has grossly deceived this party. Why, I believe I have ground of action for assault against that honorable gentleman. When the caucus was held—I do not think I am betraying any secrets—at which the honorable member for Waitemata proposed the honorable member for Port Chalmers, I wanted to know why it was we were deposing the honorable member for the Thames, our late leader. I said I had seen nothing to lead me to vote for his being deposed, and, unless it was done with his sanction and consent, I should not follow any other leader. The honorable member for Auckland City West at once caught hold of my coat-tail and whispered, "Do not say a word about it. There is a split in the party. Some of the Otago members who are coming will not do so unless he resigns." I said what I had to say, though, in spite of the honorable gentleman. But the honorable gentleman's enthusiasm will be understood, when I state that on that occasion he actually tore the coat-tails of one of his colleagues. We made a mistake on that occasion in changing our leader. If we had not done so, we should not have been in the position we are now in; and therefore I do not feel so sorry as some honorable gentlemen have said they do. As to the leadership, it is true that the honorable member for Waitemata got up and spoke in favour of Sir George Grey being leader, and he uttered sentiments which I thoroughly agreed with; but later the honorable gentleman changed his mind and proposed Mr. Macandrew. He did not say it was a matter of expediency, but a matter of necessity. I think it was unfair that the honorable gentleman should get up and tell us what was done between himself and the late Premier. He did not give us sufficient information to enable us to come to a conclusion whether such took place before the last want-of-confidence vote was taken, or afterwards. If before, it places the late Premier in a very peculiar position, because he had a full Ministry at the time, and, if any one were taken in, some of his then colleagues would have had to make room for the honorable member for Waitemata. If it took place afterwards, it should be simply treated as a matter of conversation between the two. At all events, whether it took place before or after, it does not say much for the judgment of our late leader or our present leader, because we have the older members having advantage over the younger ones on this occasion. We now have the past history of the honorable member for Waitemata in this direction, and we find it has repeated itself on this occasion. The previous conduct of the honorable member has not been such as to recom-

Mr. Seddon

mend him either for Premier or for Treasurer. I say that is so. That, in itself, to my mind, shows a want of judgment, and unfitness either to be Treasurer or Premier, or to hold any position on the Government benches of this colony. Now, Sir, Miss Braddon wrote a work, and it was called "The Trail of the Serpent." Well, Sir, the trail of the serpent down about the lobbies of this House could be well defined by the breadth of its trail. There is something melodramatic about the attitude of the honorable member for Waitemata. When he commenced telling the secrets of the party and talked about putting away the Premiership and the Treasurership, he reminded me very much of a little animal, a native of America, which has the peculiar knack, when jammed in a corner, of emitting an offensive odour. The backwoodsmen of America hate it. As to any honorable member who commits a breach of confidence in the manner which the honorable member for Waitemata has been guilty of, we must look upon him with the same repugnance the backwoodsmen of America do upon the little animal to which I have referred. To complete the dramatic effect which the honorable member for Waitemata wished to produce, he ought to have said, "I die for my country," and then fallen back. Then a monument to his memory would have been erected in Auckland, and the brass inscription on it would simply have been,—

Here lies Reader Wood, encased in wood:
When alive he sold the Liberal cause for Auckland's good.

Well, Sir, I say that he has done no good to that cause. He has done a deal of harm to the Liberal cause, and has created a feeling of mistrust among our party. There are with us men of different views as regards small questions, but amongst whom on the one question of liberal measures there is no dissension. But we find there is now a disunion—a feeling of mistrust amongst honorable members. I believe those honorable members on the Government side of the House mistrust the Government, because they do not know how many of these secret arrangements may be in existence. The atmosphere is cloudy with them. We hear about the Nelson members, that they have a compact entered into. We have more than that. The Premier himself tells this House that he wishes it to inquire into all the promises made by the late Government, if it insists on having this particular document produced. From the statements made about the Auckland members, from what has been stated by the Premier and the Press, the sooner we have it the better. If it is shown that the Government of the country is to be built upon this rotten foundation, then I say the sooner we go back to our constituencies the better. I shall go in and support those liberal Bills, and then, when we pass them, let us have a dissolution, and let the people send back men to represent them who will not have to go on their knees to ask for justice to be done to their districts, and who will not do that which is neither right nor just. I say it is only right and just that this discussion should have taken place. It will do an immense deal of good. It will have this effect: that no Government, for the future,

will do what it appears has been done on this occasion, because, whichever way you look at it, I feel there must be something more than is known, or else the Government would say, "Produce the document and end the debate." At all events, the debate will have this effect: that honorable gentlemen who belong to a party will not in future do what those honorable members have done. If there are any waverers on our side of the House, let them leave us at once. I shall stand here, and know then that I have men by my side fighting for a principle, and know I can depend on those men when occasion requires. If there are any falterers on our side, the sooner they cross over to the Government side of the House the better. I cannot conclude by fitter language than that expressed by a countryman of my own, when he spoke of a friend who had betrayed him. On passing him by, the same as I hope every honorable man will pass those honorable members by outside the House—it is the only way in which you can show your abhorrence of their conduct—my country poet used language which well applies to the honorable member for Waitemata. He said, "There he sits—glib of tongue, soulless, untruthful, therefore dangerous: eschew him as ye would a viper." When an honorable gentleman of this House does the same thing as this person, we ought to treat him in a like manner, because in doing what he did the honorable member for Waitemata betrayed his friends.

Captain COLBECK.—Under other circumstances I should have considered my inability and disinclination to speak; but the time has come when it is necessary for me to say that the question at issue has not been fairly put. The reason why the four Auckland members have left the Auckland party and have joined the Government is, because we knew well that there was no party strong enough in that so-called Opposition to form a Government. Of my own knowledge, I know that there were four Premiers proposed, and a sufficient number of gentlemen opposed to every one, which reduced each of the four below the position that our late leader held. They talk about desertion of party. What did they do? They deserted the only possible leader of the party. Sir George Grey must himself confess that the words I used to him were fair and reasonable: "Sir George, your party have shunted you, and consequently I am freed from my allegiance to that party." Had honesty been exercised towards Sir George Grey, we should have been in the position to carry forward the business of the country with credit to the party; but, when they talk about political immorality, they do not tell the House that they deserted the only man they were sent to support. Is it fair they should turn round on me, who never voted at any of their caucuses? I simply disapproved of their course.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, no.

Captain COLBECK.—I simply disapproved, by my conduct, of their action. I came to the only chief whom I recognized and asked for liberty to do what I thought proper. It has been said that we might have had the same jus-

tice from the present Opposition that we should get from the Ministry. But what was the good of asking for that justice from them, when they had no power to grant it? The whole party was broken up. If we had stayed with them, the administration of affairs could not have gone on. A party is no party which is broken into shreds and fragments. And they want to put it before the country that I am a "rat." I am only proud to be such a "rat." It is not fair to the people who sent us here, to prevent the business of the country being proceeded with. We came here to make laws, and to do our duty to the country, and the action taken by the present Opposition is not fair, reasonable, or just. Yet men can talk about the injustice of the actions of men who come over to the Ministry, when they themselves violate every pledge given, and have deserted the only man who could, or ever will, lead them. I left my Auckland party, they say. Why? Because we are determined the work of the country shall go on. And then they state that they shall vote against everything for the good of Auckland! This is their sense of justice, of what is due to their constituencies! I say the action we have taken has not been taken with a view to advancing our own interests, or because the Government has bought us in a manner that could be considered discreditable. We simply asked that justice should be done to the whole of the colony. That justice has been promised, and we did nothing of which we need be ashamed.

Major HARRIS.—In standing up to address this large assemblage, I do so feeling that I am wholly unprepared. At the same time, I am induced to refer to some of the remarks that have fallen from the honorable member for Marsden. I think I ought not to sit still and listen to the imputations which have been made against the party to which I consider I have still the honor to belong. The statements made by the honorable member for Marsden have been against us and showing up our secrets, and I shall therefore address the few remarks I have to make to the speech of the honorable member for Marsden. If any persons know him well, it is some of us who have come down from Auckland with him. And we know him better than other honorable members of the House, who had no previous knowledge of the honorable gentleman. I say this: that from the day I first landed in Wellington until this day I never had confidence in that honorable gentleman. I have been on the most friendly terms with him, but I wish to expose nothing but what is of a public nature. I do not wish to speak of him in his private capacity. In private life I believe he is a thorough gentleman. I should say that from the day I landed here I never had any confidence in him as a man who would stick to us through thick and thin.—("Oh, oh!" and laughter.)—I mean the thickest of the fight, and when our ranks are thinned. That is what I mean. I had no confidence in that gentleman sticking to us when our ranks were thinned. I knew well—as well as at this moment—that, as long as you dangled out the Kaipara Railway before that honorable gentleman, he could not refuse voting. The

honorable gentleman opposite has dangled that before him in the same way as carrots are dangled before a horse. After that, I shall have done with my remarks on my honorable friend the member for Marsden. I shall now turn round on a few of our acquaintances—I do not call them friends. I take the honorable member for Waitemata, for instance. He is one in whom I placed the most implicit confidence. I did so simply because I did not know him. I find out since that I should not have done so; but, being a young member, and unacquainted with the rules of the House, I certainly did place reliance in him. I say I was deceived, and thoroughly deceived. My district has been disgraced, Auckland has been disgraced, but, thank goodness, not by me, but by those I placed confidence in, and who would have us crawl to a Ministry if we want anything from them. We placed every confidence in this gentleman. We elected him as one of ten to carry matters through and take advantage of anything that might occur; and what do we find? That, while we reposed confidence in this gentleman, he was making terms for himself and three others who joined with him to deceive us. We have been deceived. We feel that we have been deceived; and if I did not give expression to my feelings I should not be doing justice to the constituents I represent, or to the gentlemen who stood shoulder to shoulder with me while we were being deceived. I should not, perhaps, speak of the honorable member for Waitemata in this way. He is an older member of this House than I am, but I am sorry for him. That, I think, is about as contemptuous an expression as the rules of the House would permit me to use. I shall be sorry for him when he gets back to Auckland. The Auckland papers, according to the telegrams we see, may lead him to believe that he has done a good thing: but we know that the papers mislead people. When he gets back I almost think he will be dragged through the streets of Auckland with a halter round his neck. He will be treated in the most ignominious manner possible, and, if he is not, all that I can say is, he ought to be. As to the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. W. J. Hurst), I am not at all disappointed in him. I prophesied from the first what he would do, and honorable gentlemen who have now the dishonor of belonging to the Auckland Province will bear me out in the statement that I told them all along that the honorable member for Auckland City West would not stand to the party to the remainder of the session. I had no confidence whatever that we should retain that gentleman during the session, because I knew that, as long as he could obtain a seat on the Government benches or the honorable member for Waitemata could obtain one for him, he would hang in the balance, and go with the side that he could get most out of—not in money, of course, because I do not believe he would be bought in that way—but in the shape of flattery or soft soap: I knew that you could lay it on as thick as you liked, and he would take it. As to the honorable member for Newton, I believe he has made a slip, and one that he will

Captain Colbeck

regret when he has had time to reflect upon it. There is no person in this House who regrets the step he has taken more than I do myself, because in the Province of Auckland he has always been looked upon as a person who could be relied on at any time. I pity him. I shall vote for the amendment, as that seems to me to be the most creditable thing I can do.

Mr. LUNDON.—I cannot allow this question to be put, without saying a few words. I will begin by referring to the honorable member for Newton, and I may say that he is the only one of the four I regret losing. In all our political battles we have fought side by side, and there is no man more astonished at his conduct than I am. For many years we sat in the Provincial Council of Auckland together advocating the cause of free institutions, progress, and the rights of the working-man. We have talked together about fit men to represent the people, and whenever a man was handed over to me for election I always got him returned. In the district I have lived in for thirty years, no man I have brought forward has ever been beaten. I have assisted the honorable member for Newton, and I am sorry that he should go and make a bargain with the Government without consulting me. I am not at all surprised at the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. W. J. Hurst), for I knew exactly what he could do. As to the honorable member for Waitemata, he has only done now what he has done before. The honorable member for Marsden is perhaps less to blame than any of the four, because he is a young member; but when the honorable member for Newton, a man of the people, a man whom all New Zealand looked up to as the representative of the working-man, enters into an arrangement without consulting me, whom he has always consulted before, I say that he has deceived me, and I am not the man to forget deception of that sort; I am not the man to be cheated and deceived—I should blame myself if I allowed it. As to the honorable member for Waitemata, we brought him to book before he came to a decision. We asked him if it was true that he had made a compact with the Government, and that he was going to leave the Opposition. He said it was true, but that he was not quite gone—that he was still open to be brought back. If the Government agreed to the terms, he was gone; but they had not yet agreed to the terms. That was about eleven o'clock on Friday morning. He told us that he had read in Carlyle's works that if you drew a chalk-line round a goose, no matter what food or water you offer it outside that line, the goose will so regard the chalk-line as a barrier that it will not go over it—and that the party was the goose. But the honorable gentleman has gone over the line, and to my mind he is the gander on this occasion. Then I asked Mr. Swanson, "Will you tell me what you got for your district?" Of course I never expected he would get anything for himself. He said, "We are going to get justice for the schools. They are to be put in the same position as the schools of Canterbury and Otago." Now, he is no fool in

politics. He knew that we had forty-five or forty-six members on our side, and that gave us a good majority; so that he could not complain that his district was not likely to get justice: that was no excuse. As for the schools, he could have got more for the schools, and he could have got it on the floor of this House, which is the proper place to get it. The men who returned him expect him to get it here; and when some honorable members came to me and said, "You know Swanson will sell us," I said I did not believe it. I told them that if the honorable member for Newton meant to go round he would tell me. But then, when the Premier came down to the House with a jaunty air, and said he was ready for a division, I warned the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) not to take a scratch division. Then when we went away at lunch-time it was arranged that I was to come back and move an amendment to Mr. Whitaker's proposal to give the Auckland District £200,000, to the effect that the country north of Auckland should get half that sum for roads and bridges; and the honorable member for Marsden was to second it. As Captain Colbeck and myself went up to the Committee-room I said, "I will not forget my constituents;" but I pointed out that it was of no use asking the present Government for anything. It was all nonsense to ask them for anything, because they would tell you that they would give you an answer in a week or so; and what was the use of that, when we knew that they would be on the other side of the House in a day or two? I put no notices of motion on the Paper for works for my district, because I knew this Government would have no power to carry them out. I said, "There is one weak spot in the Auckland party, and that is Reader Wood and Hurst. If we can keep them together we shall win." "London," he said, "you are a clever man. My G——, if you only knew what was going on in the office!"

Captain COLBECK.—I said no such thing. I said nothing, because I did not want the honorable member to know what I was going to do. I let him make his statement, and I said nothing.

Mr. LUNDON.—I will tell the country and the honorable member's constituents what happened. I went to Mr. Sheehan then. He said, "Where do you dine to-day? I'll go with you." Now, I am a man who, politically, never told a lie in my life, and never made an electioneering promise I did not keep. I will refer to Mr. Sheehan to bear me out, and he can speak after me.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE.

Major ATKINSON.—I would ask the House to go into Committee of Supply in order to pass the resolution necessary under the Public Revenues Act in order to enable the Government to use the funds provided by that Act.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I do not wish to say anything that will lead to a long debate, but I desire to say a few words before this question is put. What I wish to say is this: When the resolution was passed, upwards of ten days ago, to the effect that the House had no confidence in the Government as then constituted, I looked upon it that the object of that resolution was that the then Government should be reconstructed. I considered that the intention of the resolution was, not that there should be a coalition, but a reconstruction. And, Sir, I feel, if that resolution had been followed up by the usual constitutional course, we should now have had on those benches a Ministry possessing the confidence of a working majority of this House. I believe we should have had such a Government.

Mr. HALL.—I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. I think it is desirable we should know whether he proposes now to discuss the question of confidence or no-confidence.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I am not going to discuss the question of confidence or no-confidence. I believe it is my privilege to address the House on any subject on the motion for going into Committee of Supply.

Mr. HALL.—Then, Sir, I would ask your ruling, whether it is in order that the honorable gentleman should introduce any matter questioning the confidence of the House in the Government, inasmuch as lower down on the Order Paper there is a motion distinctly raising that question. Under these circumstances, I submit that the honorable gentleman cannot now raise the question of confidence or no-confidence. If the honorable gentleman is only about to give an explanation as to how he will deal with that motion, I shall not object; but, I submit, he cannot now go into the question of whether the Government does or does not possess the confidence of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable member for Port Chalmers said he would not go into the question of confidence or no-confidence.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I am not going to raise a debate upon that question. I was merely saying that, if the resolution had been followed up in the usual constitutional way, we should have a Ministry on those benches possessing the confidence of a working majority of the House, which I take leave to doubt very much whether the present Government possesses.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You are really going too far.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Then I shall not go further in that direction; but I may say this, at all events: that in that case there need not have been any delay in the business of the country, and we should have been very far advanced with the work of the session at the present time. No doubt it may be said, and will be said, that there has been no question of public policy raised during all these debates. That may or may not be; but what I say is this: that both sides of the House, not only within these walls, but at the hustings, concurred in the policy of the late Government. I say, both sides

of the House had agreed to adopt the measures brought in by the Grey Government, and the question has been, and ought to be, whether those measures should be placed upon the Statute Book under the auspices of the party that originated them, or by the party upon whom they have, so to speak, been forced. In other words, are the children more likely to be reared to a healthy maturity by the parents by whom they were begotten, or by the parents by whom they were adopted very much against the will of their adopters, or, at all events, more from necessity than inclination? I have been charged, and those who have acted with me on this side of the House have been charged, that our whole object has been to secure place and power for ourselves. Well, Sir, I do not dispute that that is not a perfectly legitimate object, to a certain extent; but I should be sorry to think that love of either place or power is the main-spring of the action of honorable members on either side. I decline to believe that it is so. At all events, I do not think that either of those motives would animate any one worthy to occupy high place in this colony. I can safely say, for myself, that, as far as I am concerned, both one and the other are secondary considerations. My experience of both might, I think, be described in the language of one of the greatest of my countrymen, who, speaking of popularity, says, "It rifles home of its sweets, and, by elevating a man above his fellows, places him in a region of desolation, where he stands a conspicuous mark for the shafts of envy, malice, and detraction." That is my experience, and I have had a good many of those shafts to bear, and probably there is no public man in New Zealand who would be less deterred by those things from doing what he considers his duty as a representative of the people. Sir, as I have said before, had the motion of which I gave notice been allowed to come up when it ought to have come up, and when under all other circumstances but the present it would have come up—for I cannot understand any Government going on with the business of the country with such a motion hanging over them—then, I say, it would have been carried by a majority of six, and we should be sitting on those benches now with a majority of twelve to back us. But circumstances to which I need not allude have taken place, under which it is useless for us to press that motion now. Just on the eve of battle, we were deserted by our first lieutenant, and by a certain number of the crew. Therefore it would be a waste of time to proceed further with this motion. We have been three months doing nothing but talking, and it is high time we proceeded to the business of the country. I can assure you, Sir, that such is my desire, and that such is the desire and determination of the great Liberal party with which I have the honor to be associated. I do not know that I need take up the time much longer, but I will just refer to one matter. It has been stated in a Government organ that overtures have been made by me or on my behalf to join the present Government. All I can say is, that I most emphatically and distinctly deny that any such

overture was made by me or with my consent. My great object has been to see party government established in this country. I think that the great curse of the country hitherto has been the absence of party parliamentary government, and that it would be very much to the detriment of the country if any action were taken by myself or my party which would prolong that state of things. I might have said a good deal, but I have carefully abstained from saying anything that might be regarded as personally offensive to any one, and therefore I shall not proceed further. If in order, I should like my no-confidence resolution to be brought up and discharged, and got off the Order Paper at once. If that cannot be done, of course I cannot help it; but, as far as I am concerned, the motion will be allowed to lapse. I have nothing more to say except this: that I think, under the circumstances, it would be a waste of time to proceed with this motion at present. I think that "discretion is the better part of valour," and therefore, if in order, I shall be prepared to move that all the preceding Orders of the day be postponed, with a view to having my motion discharged.

Mr. HALL.—The Government will be quite ready to meet the wishes of the honorable gentleman as to the manner in which his motion should be disposed of. After the resolution which the Colonial Treasurer wishes to have passed has been dealt with, I shall be glad to move that the remaining Orders of the day, and the notices of motion which precede that of the honorable gentleman, be postponed, in order that we may take up his, and that it may be discharged from the Order Paper. Sir, the Government share the desire of the honorable gentleman that business should be gone on with now without any further delay. But we do not take to ourselves the blame which I understood the honorable gentleman to attribute to us for the loss of time which has already occurred. I wish to follow the honorable gentleman in avoiding as much as possible debatable matter, and I will therefore only say this: that in the course we have adopted we have endeavoured to vindicate the principle that any Government taking their seats on this bench are entitled to a fair trial before being attacked as we have been. That is the principle we have endeavoured to vindicate, and which I consider we have succeeded in vindicating. That being done, we are only too anxious to concur in any proceeding which may expedite the business of the country. There is only one other point in the honorable gentleman's remarks to which I feel bound to advert, and that is the question of the paternity of the particular Bills which he has mentioned—the liberal measures of reform. I do not admit the claim the honorable gentleman has put in. His party may have some share in the paternity of those measures, but there are two parents to most children, and I think we have a share in the paternity of these. If a feeling of natural affection is a test of paternity, I can assure the honorable gentleman that we have quite as strong a claim to those children as he or any of his party has. I go further, and say that the parliamentary his-

tory of this colony will show that gentlemen on this side of the House have quite as strong a claim to credit in regard to electoral reform as those on the other side. It will be found on examination that gentlemen opposite, who now claim the exclusive paternity of liberal measures, have not always acted as might be expected from natural parents. I will say no more on that subject. I am only glad that we now both concur in launching these children into the world, and I hope the only rivalry between us will be as to which of us can most improve the measures about to be submitted to the House.

Want-of-confidence motion lapsed.

SUPPLY.

The House went into Committee of Supply, and passed the following resolution: "That, under the provisions of the 2nd section of 'The Public Revenues Act 1878 Amendment Act, 1879,' the Treasury is hereby authorized to borrow on the security of deficiency bills from time to time from any bank, or other person, or from the Public Works Fund, any sum or sums not exceeding in the whole two hundred thousand pounds, in addition to the sum of four hundred thousand pounds already borrowed under the power granted by the 18th section of 'The Public Revenues Act, 1878.'"

The resolution was reported to the House, read a second time, and agreed to.

LAND BILL.

Mr. ROLLESTON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he was not as fully prepared with it as he should wish to have been, because he was not aware that the House would so soon cease party strife and proceed to business. This Bill was prepared by the late Government. Its provisions had in the main the approval of the present Government, but he wished it to be understood that the Bill, as it now stood, was the Bill of the late Government. The late Ministry also proposed to introduce a Bill which appeared next on the Order Paper—the Special Settlement Bill. The Government were of opinion that the provisions of that measure would be better embodied in an amendment of the Land Act—that it was not advisable to scatter legislation on the subject of land through different Acts. There was a certain amount of inconvenience in the practice, and he thought the late Minister of Lands also at one time held that opinion. The object of the Bill of which he was now moving the second reading was mainly, first of all, to remedy difficulties that arose, and which he thought were foreseen in the House, from the passing of the Crown Lands Sale Act in 1877. There was an idea then, when the Land Fund by the decision of the House became common property, that it was necessary to insist upon a uniform price of land throughout the colony. That Act, together with the Land Act of 1877, which had been previously passed, caused this difficulty: that practically no lands could be sold on deferred payments for less than £3 an acre. The consequence had been, that those facilities for the settlement of land which were desirable through-

out the country had been very considerably checked. The 3rd clause of this Bill proposed to remedy that, by allowing the Governor to fix the upset price at which rural and suburban lands could be disposed of on deferred payments, the price to be 30s. per acre for rural lands and 90s. per acre for suburban lands. It still gave the power to sell lands of special value at a higher price; and it did away with a wrong, caused, he believed unintentionally, by the conflict between the Crown Lands Sale Act and the Land Act in respect to the sale of land on deferred payments. There were other provisions in the Bill which were, perhaps, more matters for consideration in Committee than questions of principle. Subsections (6) and (7) of the 3rd section involved very important considerations. The 6th subsection provided for the way in which the revenue derived from the sale of agricultural land on deferred payments could be disposed of. Under the law as it now stood, all proceeds of agricultural land sold on deferred payments went to the counties and Road Boards until one-third had been paid away; and the 7th subsection provided with regard to pastoral lands on deferred payments in the same way. He would give an instance: If there were a run in Otago of 50,000 acres, that run might be assumed to be worth £60,000; but first of all the Crown would have to pay 5s. an acre compensation on resuming that land from the pastoral tenant, and for surveys and improvements; so that, practically, the sum of £12,000, or thereabouts, would have to be paid away by the Crown before a sixpence came into the public chest. That was a state of things which the present Government thought, with the late Government, ought to be put a stop to; and this Bill would put a stop to it. The local bodies had a right to look for 20 per cent., but not that the Government of the country should be put to that large expense before one sixpence came into the revenue. He entirely agreed with the principle of the Special Settlements Bill of the late Government, as he understood it from the draft he had received. The only reason why that Bill was not now proceeded with was, that it was thought better to embody its provisions in this Bill; and that was, he believed, originally the intention of the late Government. The present Government, and he, as Minister of Lands, believed most thoroughly that nothing was of greater importance in a new country than settlement on the land by industrious farmers and small settlers. He would like to read a report which he knew from personal experience was a faithful picture of what had been the result of small-farm settlements in the South Canterbury District under his own supervision. The following were extracts from a report by the Immigration Officer at Christchurch:—

“Neither the season of the year nor the number would have been of so much importance, if the plan of settling the people in the country districts had been continued. In 1874-75 the system of forming village settlements was commenced—certainly on a small scale—but it worked admirably. The plan, shortly, was this: On the

line of railway, or adjacent thereto, as at Temuka, a reserve was laid off, with sections varying in size from one-half to two acres, allotted to each family after the cottage was built.

“In building these cottages or huts (as the walls are chiefly of sods), the plan adopted was this: The women and children remained on rations at the main dépôt. The men were taken to the locality, and built the huts under the direction and superintendence of a competent ganger, who was paid from 9s. to 10s. per day. The men had rations allowed them during the time they were building their huts, but nothing further.

“The average cost of the huts was £10 each, and the terms of occupation as follow: First year, rent free; second and third years, a rental of 2s. per week. The rents paid into the Treasury exceed £500.”

His belief was that, under the present system of immigration, that which prevented the rise of working-men and prevented them from realizing their hopes was the payment of high rents through being obliged to stick about the towns, where they were not able to obtain a roof over their heads for themselves and their families without paying an extravagant rent. The report went on to say, “Although at the present time there is a great deal of distress, and a large number of unemployed, I venture to assert that there is not one, who was located in the manner I have stated, amongst the unemployed.” That, he thought, was good testimony to the necessity of settling people on the land, and of enabling them to live at a moderate rental. The report continued, “I trust that at no distant date a similar plan will be adopted, as I am convinced it is the only way of carrying out satisfactorily the immigration and public works policy.” He was exceedingly pleased to find that the late Government had determined to act upon this principle, and to suggest a system of village settlement to Parliament. He hoped in the course of a few days to have the proposals they now had under consideration further matured. There were one or two points which the Government wished to add to those they found already suggested. One of those was to give a power of association to working-men’s clubs and others to avail themselves of facilities for settlement together. There was no doubt that there was a very great advantage in people settling together, and being able to help each other in their various avocations. For the purposes of schools, police, and all other purposes that affected the well-being of the people as a community, it was very desirable that they should be brought together, and have facilities for living together in comfort, and with the power of taking advantage of those institutions which the State provided for the people as a whole. That, to his mind, was the advantage of bringing people together in village settlements. There was another proposal which the Government intended to embody in the Act, and that was, to offer facilities for special settlements. There had been some instances of failure among special settlements; but he believed that was in consequence of insufficient caution in the selection of localities. They had, in the case of

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the Katikati Settlement, an example of successful colonization, which might be pursued under proper restrictions. This they hoped to embody in the Act. He felt very strongly that upon the settlement of the land depended the prosperity of the colony in future. If they simply carried on immigration and public works they would merely have a floating population, wandering about the country, having no interest in the colony, and never becoming good citizens. It was said, four hundred years before the Christian era, that the greatest teacher of morality was the possession of land. Nobody believed in that more strongly than he did, and he believed thoroughly that the public works system here had not had that fair-play it ought to have had, because the settlement of the people on the land had not been sufficiently attended to.

Mr. MACANDREW would be glad to support the second reading of the Bill; but he was sorry to hear that the honorable member proposed to unite the Village Settlements and Special Settlements Bills with it. There was not the slightest doubt that one of the greatest evils now was that their land regulations were very cumbrous and complicated; and they ought to take the village settlements and special settlements altogether outside the jurisdiction of the present Land Acts and Waste Lands Boards. That was the great object he himself had in view in recommending that a special Act should be passed. At present there were eight or nine Waste Lands Boards throughout the colony; and the Government could do nothing without the intervention of those Land Boards. He thought the Governor in Council should have power, within certain limits defined by Statute, to promote those village and small-farm settlements under regulations suitable to the circumstances of different localities. He hoped the Government would reconsider their decision. Had the late Government remained in office, he hoped they would have had fifteen or twenty settlements of this kind laid off at once in various localities throughout the colony, where Crown lands were being opened up by railways, and where the people could have got employment on the railways for perhaps three days out of six, the other three days being devoted to their own small holdings. What he desired to see was the system initiated by the New Zealand Company in the early days. He recollected that the employment given by the Company was upon these terms—namely, three days' work for the Company, and the other three days for the immigrant himself. To his mind both sides of the House should be ashamed of having spent so many millions of money on public works without having devoted a large portion to the settlement of the country. He took very great blame to himself for being in the Government nearly two years without the present proposals being acted upon earlier. However, it was one they never lost sight of; and it took a year or two in the Government before they could get to be masters of the situation so as to proceed with the real work. He took great interest in the matter himself; and, in fact, it was the only consideration which made him regret not having a seat on the Government benches,

because he would like to have had a hand in this pie. He felt confident that the present occupants of those benches, if they bestirred themselves, might carry out the ideas he entertained quite as well as, if not much better than, he could.

Mr. HUTCHISON said the Premier had proposed to deal with the electoral law of the colony in five or six Bills, and he (Mr. Hutchison) suggested it would only be in conformity with that mode of legislation that the land laws should be dealt with on the same principle—say, the present Bill, one for village settlements, and another for special settlements. The observations of the honorable member for Port Chalmers were entitled to much weight when he stated that all these matters could not be properly dealt with in one measure.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE wished to say one or two words as to the land laws of the colony generally, and more especially as they affected the provincial district from which he came. In the first place, he presumed that it was the wish and desire of honorable members of this House, to whichever party they belonged, to locate and settle population upon the waste lands of the colony. He took it that it was the highest ambition of any statesman here to permanently place, not only the wealthy, but the working-men—in fact, people of all classes—upon the now waste and barren lands, of which there were immense tracts. He was perfectly satisfied that nothing could more effectually stifle the cry of the unemployed in this colony than the putting people of all classes upon this land. It appeared to him that, in the case of those persons who were not in the happy position of being able to pay immediately for the land, the Legislature should give considerable facilities to men of small means to settle upon the waste lands of the Crown. It always struck him that their legislation had gone rather in the contrary direction than in that desirable direction. They allowed persons possessed of capital to purchase land at a certain price, the minimum of which was 20s. an acre. To the person who was possessed of little or no capital they did the most extraordinary thing that any country had ever done. They were anxious to give facilities to persons to settle upon the land, and those who bought land on the deferred-payment system had to pay 50 per cent. more for it than those who bought for cash. The latter class of settlers must absolutely agree to live upon the land, make improvements upon it, do certain things from year to year, and fulfil certain regulations before they obtained the Crown grant. In his opinion the land laws of the colony were not sufficiently liberal. If he were Minister of Lands he would introduce a Bill giving the men without capital the land at 10 per cent. more than to those who purchased for cash. It was a mockery to say, on the one hand, that they would give land on deferred payment, and, on the other, to require persons to pay 50 per cent. more for the land than those persons paid who purchased for cash. It had been his desire to see the waste lands of the Crown classified, and sold at a uniform price. It was a matter of detail to

discuss what the minimum or maximum price of these waste lands should be. His honorable friend the member for the Thames had heard him say before that one of the principal reasons why he did not agree with his administration was, because that honorable gentleman had broken faith with this House and the country by declaring, some three or four years ago, on the second reading of the Waste Lands Sale Bill, that it was merely a temporary measure, and that he would introduce a Bill the next session dealing with the classification and price of the waste lands of the colony, and leaving that promise unredeemed to the present day. He (Mr. Hursthouse) knew that in many cases hundreds of men had gone away from one district of the colony to another, and many persons had departed from the shores of New Zealand. They considered the minimum price in the Nelson Provincial District absolutely prohibitory to the settlement of these lands. He believed, if the lands were classified by the Waste Lands Board, or by the District Surveyor, which probably would be better, a great deal more settlement would go on than had gone on for the last year or two—at all events in the Nelson Provincial District. He would draw the attention of the Minister of Lands to the extraordinary state in which the surveys of the waste lands of the Crown were at present. In the Nelson Provincial District innumerable applications had been made for land. Some of them had been made five, six, or seven years ago. Certain charges had been paid, and people were anxiously waiting to get upon the land; they were hanging, as it were, between heaven and earth, waiting to see the allotments marked off, and to get to work. Many of them had gone to other parts of the country, and some to other colonies. They had thrown up their deposit-money and left the district, simply because they could not get the land surveyed or their allotments mapped out. He would draw the attention of the Minister of Lands to the provision for compulsory residence on deferred-payment allotments. He would have no objection to the regulation being rigidly enforced compelling the improvement of land held upon deferred payment, but it appeared to him decidedly unfair and absurd to compel a man to reside on land taken up on deferred payment. He knew of considerable tracts of waste lands of the Crown which lay behind rich valleys and fertile plains, which could be taken up to a considerable extent had not the people who took them up on deferred payments to absolutely reside there. There was another matter which he should like particularly to bring under the notice of the Minister of Lands, and that was the very great injustice which was done to a large section of the Nelson land-owners by the operation of the Crown Lands Sale Act of 1877. It might be known to some honorable members that a great quantity of land had been taken up under the Waste Lands Act of 1874, under which the persons who had taken it up had to pay 5 per cent. interest on the value of the land, and had the right to purchase it at a subsequent period at the then assessed value of the land. Since the passing of that Act the

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minimum price had been raised from 7s. 6d. to £1 an acre. The people took up the land in good faith, never anticipating that it would be more than 7s. 6d. an acre at the most; but they could not get their Crown grants unless they paid £1 an acre. He took it that that was not the intention of the law of 1877, but nevertheless such was the case. He was assured by the Commissioner of Crown Lands that these people would have to pay £1 an acre where they ought not to pay more than 7s. 6d. They had been in occupation of the land prior to the passing of the Act. It often struck him that there was a great deal of —he was going to say “buncombe”—talked with regard to the liberal land laws of this country. They induced people to come to this country by telling them they would obtain land on deferred payment. They proceeded, in the first place, to charge them 50 per cent. more for it than the man who brought money in his pocket had to pay; they imposed rates; they imposed a land-tax, also taxes upon dogs and sheep. Many intending settlers had been prevented from settling on the land on account of these taxes, and from the fact that they had to pay 50 per cent. more for the land than had to be paid by the persons who bought the land for cash. It appeared to him that the settlement of the land was the great object they should aim at. He altogether disapproved of a theory laid down by a gentleman who had held the position of Attorney-General, that the colony should keep the land until it would sell for 20s. an acre. There were hundreds of thousands of acres of land in this colony which would never be worth £1 an acre, or, at all events, not for the next half-century. Those lands were a very great disadvantage to the settlement of the country, inasmuch as there were good patches of land intermixed with them. Those who resided on the good patches had to maintain the roads throughout the land. He often felt—and it was still his opinion—that it would pay the State better to give this land away for the sake of getting the rates and assistance in maintaining the roads. He hoped the Minister of Lands would not disagree with what he had said, but would endeavour to introduce some provision to give effect to what he had pointed out with regard to the position of those persons in the Nelson Provincial District who took up land under deferred payment under the Waste Lands Act of 1874.

Mr. FINN would ask the Minister of Lands to postpone the second reading of this Bill in order that there might be communication among members representing gold-fields districts regarding it. The Bill affected in a most serious manner the gold-fields districts, and would take away a great part of their revenue. It had been in his hands a few hours only, and a measure of such importance required time for consideration. He would ask the honorable gentleman to postpone the second reading until next day.

Mr. GIBBS was not surprised at the honorable member who had just spoken saying he had not read the Bill. The work honorable members had been doing was not studying the work of legislation, but something far less pro-

fitable to the country. His honorable friend the member for Motueka had anticipated him in regard to one or two points he desired to call attention to. The Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Nelson Provincial District had reported that the settlement of the waste lands of the Crown in that district had almost ceased, owing to the price having been increased to £1 an acre instead of the comparatively low price which had hitherto been obtained. This Bill, instead of removing that difficulty, increased it, because it provided that the land should not be sold for less than 30s. an acre. That difficulty must be removed, or else the settlement of the waste lands in that part of the country would cease. Honorable members coming from the favoured localities of Canterbury and Otago had but little idea of the class of land the settlers in the Provincial District of Nelson had to deal with. They were mostly forest lands that were now open for settlement, and he need not speak of the difficulties intending settlers had to encounter in bringing those lands into profitable cultivation. These were not only bush lands, but lands which, when cleared at great expense, could only be used for pastoral purposes, and where the rule insisting on occupation, referred to by the honorable member for Motueka, could not be carried out. Occupation would be out of the question. The ordinary forest lands in that district, when cleared, would not be fit for any other than pastoral purposes—certainly a very small proportion would be fit for agricultural purposes. He hoped the Minister of Lands would take into consideration the report of the Commissioner of Waste Lands in Nelson, by which he would be greatly assisted in dealing with the matter, he was sure.

Mr. PYKE asked the Government to take back this Bill and recast it. They could not claim this as one of their measures, for it had at the head of it the name of the Hon. Mr. Thomson, and, if they took time to consider it, they would see that it was a wretched production. It was a Bill he had not ceased to denounce, both in the House and before his constituents, because it was calculated to retard rather than to promote the settlement of the country. Take section 3. That was a provision which said people should not settle in that part of the country from which he (Mr. Pyke) came: "The Governor may from time to time fix the upset price at which any allotments of rural . . . land open for sale on deferred payment may be disposed of, being not less in any case than thirty shillings per acre." Why, two-thirds of the country he represented was land of a pastoral character entirely, and would be dearly purchased at 10s. per acre; therefore, if this Bill were passed in its present shape, it must simply result in those lands never being brought to sale. In regard to land which was situated at a lower elevation, in the Land-Tax Court it was sworn in evidence—and confidently sworn too—that it was not worth 2s. 6d. per acre for the freehold: yet here the Government was prohibited from putting this land up for sale at less than 30s. per acre. It meant carrying out the idiotic idea, which he had always opposed, of eternally leasing pastoral lands. He wanted to see the pastoral land

sold, and he wanted to see every squatter's tenure turned into small freeholds, and that opprobrious term, "squatter"—for it had come to be opprobrious—exchanged for "freeholder." There was a large quantity of that land for which 5s. per acre would be sufficient; and if the Government would take out the word "less," and insert in its place the word "more," it would wonderfully improve the Bill. He believed this particular provision had been inserted in consequence of the endeavour to legislate for a particular case, and, like all legislation for particular cases, it must eventually turn out very badly for the general public. The reason why the clause was so worded, if he was correctly informed, was because of the value at which land on the Waimate Plains was estimated. But why should the whole country, for that reason, be put in the position of having an upset price affixed to the land which it could not possibly fetch, because the Waimate Plains land was supposed to be of exceptional value? The alteration would be very simple; but there might be a proviso to meet special cases, leaving it to the Government to select the special cases in which the price should be raised to above 30s. per acre. Then he came to the next subsection. The first part of it was all very well, because it got rid of the error that a man should not get the balance of 320 acres which arose from an imperfect conception of the meaning of the English language on the part of the framer of the Land Act, who used three words to indicate one thing, and one word to indicate three things, throughout the Bill; but the subsection went on,—

"Provided always that in no case shall any section be subdivided, nor shall any such sections be so grouped into an allotment unless the same are immediately contiguous to one another, nor shall the maximum area of an allotment be augmented."

He could not agree with that at all. An order had been issued at the Survey Office that all sections should be surveyed into 320-acre sections, and now a man who held 160 acres could not get the full amount he was entitled to purchase. He (Mr. Pyke) thought all sections should be made 60 or, rather, 80 acres. Eighty acres was the proper proportion, for of course four times that was 320. But why should no person be allowed to take up the necessary proportion to enable him to obtain the full complement of 320 acres unless the sections were contiguous? That was very hard. If a man had not been able to secure originally more than 160 acres, why should he not be allowed to take up another 160 acres whether it adjoined his own land or not? There was another point to which he should like to direct the attention of the House and the Government. There was an evident attempt in the Bill to defraud the County Councils. He was surprised at the present Government bringing down a measure so fraught with danger to those bodies. He was not at all surprised at such a Bill having been brought down by the late Government, because it was well known they were opposed to the county system; but the Colonial Treasurer, who was the proximate cause of the county system being adopted by the House,

ought to have known that this was a direct blow at the county system of government. He referred to subsections (6) and (7). With regard to (6), there appeared to be some justice in the provision that a one-third proportion of the moneys as received by the Government should be paid to the local bodies; but at the same time it must be borne in mind that the Government did not pay the counties any money in connection with the one-third deferred-payment blocks, except after having compelled the counties to submit for the approval of the Waste Lands Board—who knew nothing of the subject—the roads they intended to make, and sent certificates to the Government certifying that the money had been spent upon these particular roads. Therefore it simply amounted to this: that the counties would not be able to make roads until the whole amount of the purchase-money was paid, because they only got one-third per annum. They could not get roads for the people who demanded them. But subsection (7) was monstrous:—

“The provisions of section fifty-nine of the said Act shall not apply in respect of any pastoral lands sold on deferred payments, but the whole of the payments made from time to time in respect thereof shall be dealt with as ordinary land revenue.”

That did away with the one-third entirely, and provided that the local bodies should simply have 20 per cent. from the ordinary revenue. There were two evils connected with that. In the first place it would deprive the County Councils and Road Boards of the money by which they propose to render facile access to the land so sold; and in the second place the Government said, “We will sell these lands, but will make no provision for any roads being made through them;” and it would operate very injuriously against the Government, inasmuch as it would prevent sales of land taking place so freely as they would do if the purchasers knew that one-third of the proceeds would go to the local bodies for making roads and rendering the land accessible. There was one other matter to which he might direct attention and that was the technical difficulties in the Act of 1877, which ought to be remedied by a Bill of this sort. He should not oppose the second reading, but should strongly oppose the Bill in Committee, unless it were amended in many respects. He did not hold the gentlemen on the Treasury benches responsible, for it was not their Bill at all. He would also like to draw the attention of the Government and the House to the desirability of abolishing Waste Lands Boards. There were hardly two opinions on the subject. There were Waste Lands Boards—he would not speak of the composition of those Boards, because he could not do so without being actually libellous—but there were Waste Lands Boards, and behind them a Commissioner sheltering himself, no one being responsible; and then there was a Minister, who could not be considered responsible, because he was dependent upon the Waste Lands Boards, which were responsible to nobody. What could be worse than an irresponsible body dealing with the landed property of the country? And yet that was the

Mr. Pyke

present position of affairs. It would be far better to abolish the Waste Lands Boards, and to appoint Commissioners who would act entirely under Government. Let these officers be directly responsible to the Minister for their actions, and let the Minister be directly responsible to the House. He asked the Government to take this question into consideration, and not to persevere with this abortion of a Bill just now—he could call it nothing else—and he hoped that, while they practised the virtues of their predecessors, they would not clothe themselves in their rags. Let them take the Bill back, and bring down one better considered, wiser, and more prudent than this Bill was.

Mr. LONDON would like to say a few words in regard to this Bill, because, coming from the Counties of Hokianga and Mongonui, he was greatly interested in seeing some change in the present land law. He hoped there would be legislation so that the industry for which those counties were specially suitable would be encouraged. The late Government had reserved a piece of land some 26,000 acres in extent for the purpose of establishing a wine-making settlement, and he hoped the present Government would also legislate in that direction. If they did so, and set about their work heartily, he could assure them they would not get from him so much of that opposition which they had had during the last week or two, because he felt that that district, in times past, had been greatly neglected. He took steps in the matter when he was in the Provincial Council, but there were difficulties in the way and he could not succeed. There was 366,000 acres of excellent land, all in the County of Hokianga, but the waste land laws had prevented the land being sold. The Native Minister passed through the district a short time ago when he was making a certain inquiry. He went down into one of the finest districts in the colony, and he had told him (Mr. London) he had seen 100,000 acres of land as good as he wished to see anywhere, and which, if it were in any other part of the country, would be worth £6 per acre. This was land which had been offered at £2 and £1 per acre, and for which there had not been even a bid. Mr. Bryce went himself, with the honorable member for Newton, into the office of the Waste Lands Board, and offered to take up two farms at the upset price; but the law prevented it. As he understood, the law was that when land was offered for sale it must be gazetted a month before it could be taken up. Consequently Mr. Bryce did not take it up. He (Mr. London) regretted this, especially as the value of the land would have been attested by a gentleman of Mr. Bryce's experience, who had said that if he knew anything he knew what good land was; and if Mr. Bryce had been able to take up these two farms it would have encouraged others to follow his example. There were no roads or means of communication in the district, and people who went there in search of land got frightened and turned back without seeing it. He had not yet read the Bill before them. Their minds had been so occupied by wars and rumours of wars since he came to Wellington

that he was now as ignorant of the provisions of this Bill as when he left his place in the North. If the Minister of Lands would consent to take only the second reading now, he would support the measure right through if upon reading it he found it was one calculated to do good to the country. What he wanted to see in his district were roads and bridges, and special settlements. Lands in Canterbury and Otago were much more valuable than lands in the North of Auckland; so also were lands in Wanganui and Taranaki more valuable than lands in his part of the world; and, while they placed a reserve price of 30s. an acre on land north of Auckland, not an acre would be sold. Then, if the lands were not sold, and if the House voted no money to make roads and bridges with, the country would still remain unsettled. They had had their fight and squabble over the Government seats, and what they had now to do was to pass good measures. He would point out that an Act which would answer for Otago would not answer for the North of Auckland; nor would an Act for the Waikato answer for the North of Auckland. The North of Auckland had been crying out for years. The North of Auckland had had no money expended in it, either by the County Council or by that House. It was quite true that a large sum was voted for the County Council, but that was a mere "blind" to induce them to accept the Act. He might inform the Minister of Lands that the County Council in Hokianga had been writing to the Survey Department to get a road surveyed in this district. There was not one chain of road in the County of Hokianga made yet. The Council had been writing to the late Government, and had telegraphed to Sir George Grey on the subject. The late Premier telegraphed that a surveyor would be sent, but he had not been sent yet. He (Mr. Landon) was well acquainted with the wants of the district, and hoped he would be able to make a change for its good in that House. If he did not succeed, it would be no fault of his. He could say nothing of a Bill which he had neither seen nor read; but, if the Minister of Lands put a reserve of 30s. an acre on land in the North of Auckland, he ventured to say that not one acre would be sold, unless gentlemen like Mr. Bryce went there and saw how good some of it was, and could afford to take it up. But to go and live upon it before there were roads and bridges made was out of people's power. There was now an opportunity for the Government to settle the districts in the North by letting them have the land at a small price, and giving them work at road-making, &c., for a year or two. The County Councils in Mongonui and Hokianga had unanimously agreed that they would use their influence to have the price of land fixed at as liberal a rate as possible; and he hoped that, having drawn the attention of the Minister of Lands to the mistake of fixing the upset price of land in the North of Auckland at 30s. an acre, that honorable gentleman would look seriously into the matter.

Mr. J. B. FISHER said he should like to make a few remarks before the Bill went into Committee. He might say that he intended to support the Bill generally. At the same time he thought

and hoped that in Committee it might be amended with very great advantage to the country and to the Government. He had two or three objections to the Bill. In the first place, there was too much "Governor" in the Bill; in the second place, the price fixed for land was too high; and the third objection was, that there was no provision for amended administration of the land. He objected to so much gubernatorial legislation—to so much administrative legislation. He thought it better that it should be settled by the Government in power at the time, and that they should come down with fixed, definite, and ascertained proposals with reference to the price of land in various districts, showing that they had made themselves acquainted with the quality of the land in various parts of the colony, and the price at which it ought to be offered for sale. With regard to his second objection—that the price was too high—he was very much of the same opinion as the honorable member for the Bay of Islands when he stated that legislation made with reference to Canterbury, or Wellington, or Hawke's Bay, or Auckland would not be suitable to the circumstances and requirements of the people and the land lying to the north of Auckland. Now, he (Mr. Fisher) would like to impress upon the Government the fact that the legislation they might make in reference to every other part of New Zealand was in no way referable, acceptable, or applicable to the west coast of the Middle Island. He had a great deal of sympathy with the honorable member for the Bay of Islands in what he said—that the legislation attempted in this Bill was unsuitable to their requirements; because he had been a resident for the last nine years on the west coast of the Middle Island, and he found, to his cost, and to the cost of every person residing in the same community with him, that the price of land had been fixed at far too high a rate. From the time he first went down there up till now he had seen people who had made small fortunes by gold-digging waiting about town in the hope of gaining land at a reasonable price—or any price at all—that they might settle upon it. These people, after waiting a most unreasonable time, had to go away, either because they could receive no answer at all, or because the price was too high. When he told honorable members, with reference to land almost universally on the West Coast, that it cost from £40 to £60 an acre to clear it so as to render it fit for the plough, they would understand that any legislation they might make with reference to the flat lands of Canterbury, or any other clear lands, was utterly unfit for the West Coast. It was because the Governments from time to time had never been alive to the fact that the whole of New Zealand required departmental or district legislation—not general legislation, but legislation applicable to the various districts of the colony—it was because they had not recognized this fact, that the lands had ceased to be sold, and the land revenue had fallen off to the extent it had. Section 3 provided that the upset price should be not less than 30s. per acre for rural land and 90s. per acre for suburban

land. Now, he begged to recommend to the House that the minimum should be lowered to 10s. an acre, with provisos for residence and improvement. He would not do anything which would enable any man, for 2s. 6d., 5s., or 10s. an acre, to get hold of a huge block, and simply hold it and spend nothing upon it, trusting to time and circumstances to enable him to dispose of it at a large profit; but, by making wise provision with regard to settlement and improvements on the deferred-payment principle, he apprehended that the Government might make the lowest price the greatest benefit to the whole of the colony. Taking the lands of the west coast of the Middle Island of New Zealand, and the fact that it required from £40 to £60 to put it into such a condition that a man dare put a plough into it, if they offered these lands to *bonâ fide* settlers at 10s. an acre they would go upon it and clear it. In the first year it would cost them £4 10s. to £5 an acre to cut down the timber. They would wait for a favourable opportunity the following summer to burn it off, to enable them to rough-sow the ground with grass. Then it would take from ten to twelve years to rot the stumps, so as to enable them to reduce the land into reasonable condition, in order to plough it. He submitted that if the Government would provide for the sale of that land at 10s. an acre, say, giving a ten-years lease, or making the deferred payments extend over ten years, 1s. an acre for each year, insisting upon residence and an improvement clause, that in so many years the whole of the bush should be cut down, and reducing the price to the lowest possible limit—by these means the *bonâ fide* settler would be induced to settle on these lands and to clear them of the useless bush which now grew upon them and prevented the growth of grass or crops. The land ought to be given to *bonâ fide* settlers on deferred payments extending over a reasonable term: the price should be made as low as possible. Thus the land would be taken up and cleared, the whole country would thereby be greatly benefited, the people would become located on the land, and a very great increase and improvement in the population and production would follow. Now, with reference to the amended Act, it would be within the recollection of honorable members that some time ago he asked a question from the Minister of Lands with the object of ascertaining whether the Government proposed to make any provision for an amended administration of land on the West Coast. This was the difficulty they had been suffering from for years. They had made repeated representations, and were every time promised amendment, but never until this day had they received any. He would support the present Government if they introduced a measure which would have the effect of facilitating the acquisition and settlement of land on the west coast of the Middle Island. That land was good grass-producing country once the bush was cleared from it, the frequent rains and moderate seasons conducing to the production of good grasses; and if the bush were cleared away they would have a permanent class of settlers on the West Coast. At

present the people were entirely dependent upon the East Coast, even for their vegetables, because the conditions of acquiring the land were so absurd and prohibitory that it was allowed to lie in an unproductive state. He would impress upon Government the urgent necessity for better administration of West Coast lands, enabling people to get the lands cheaply and quickly. He intended to support the Bill, but he hoped the Government would bring down such amendments as would embody the views of honorable members.

Mr. KELLY was very much disappointed with the Bill, as he thought the Government intended to bring down a general measure to deal with the land question, but this was merely a technical Bill, and one that would scarcely be worth discussing if it had not been for the remarks of the honorable gentleman who moved the second reading. Every person would admit that it was necessary to provide facilities for settling the people on the land; and that was the question the Government would seriously have to face. The only question was how this was properly to be done. The requirements of the different parts of the colony would have to be carefully studied in order to bring this about, and the present Bill was not calculated to assist in securing that result. When the Provincial Councils had power to deal with the land, there was some chance of local conditions being recognized, and such regulations framed as facilitated the settlement of the people upon it. The Taranaki Provincial Council passed an Act which to a large extent opened up the land in that province to settlement; but when the provinces were abolished, and the House took up the question of dealing with the land, the system was entirely altered. Instead of recognizing that the different parts of the colony required different modes of treatment, one cast-iron system was adopted; and the Taranaki system, which was calculated to facilitate the settlement of the people on the land, was swept away, and they were placed under regulations which almost put an end to settlement on forest lands under the deferred-payment system. The requirements of Otago were entirely different from the requirements of other parts of the colony where the land was covered with forest. In dealing with forest land under the Act of 1874 the Province of Taranaki dispensed with the residence conditions, but enforced improvement conditions, and that system was entirely successful; but, as soon as the Act of 1877 came into operation settlement at once fell off to a very great extent, the reason being that forest land required years of expenditure to fit it for actual settlement. Under the Act of 1877 not only were improvements to be made by the deferred-payment selectors, but residence was imperative. That had the effect of restricting the settlement of large numbers of people who desired to make homes for their children. In imposing that condition, the House made a great mistake. The only way to provide for the advantageous settlement of the land was to dispense with the residence condition—which was not required—and enforce cultivation. They ought then to assist the settlers by making roads, and nothing more would be required. As for special

settlements, he did not believe in nursing them up. By disposing of the land on fair terms, they found that the finest land in Taranaki was readily taken up, and that the settlers did well. The best thing the Government could do with the Bill was to withdraw it and reconsider the whole subject, because a merely technical Bill was not likely to assist materially in settling the people on the land. It had been already remarked that the settlers laboured under a great many disabilities. That was perfectly true, and it was one strong reason why they should deal liberally with the deferred-payment settlers, for it had been found that the cash buyer was not always the best settler. The best settlers on the forest lands as a rule were really those who took up land on deferred payments. They gave 50 per cent. more for the land, and were bound to make improvements. This Bill was the opposite of a liberal Bill. He would not at present discuss the question whether it was wise to continue the existence of the Waste Lands Boards. All he would say was, that the Waste Lands Board of Taranaki had worked well, and had settled many difficulties that could not have been settled by the Government. In the case of the deferred-payment settlers, who always would have grievances, it was much better to have these complaints settled by these Boards, whose deliberations were open to the Press, than by the Crown Lands Commissioner, who acted on the part of the Government, and was only responsible to the Government. As regarded responsibility, he thought the Government ought to be entirely responsible for the general policy of land administration. They nominated the Boards, and could at any time dismiss them if they failed properly to administer the waste lands of the Crown. Having the power of dismissing the Boards, they could always see that they properly administered the functions which devolved on them by law.

Mr. THOMSON said the Minister of Lands had fairly explained the principal features of the Bill, although there were some points he had not touched upon. He thought it was to be regretted that he had not put the Bill into the shape in which he desired it to pass through the House. He was also sorry that the honorable gentleman proposed to embody in the Bill the clauses regarding the village settlements. The Bill was really an amendment of the Act of 1877, but the village-settlement clauses were altogether new, and he thought it would be well that they should be put into a separate Bill. The attention of the public would then be directed to that special feature of their legislation, and the Act would be a text-book to persons who wished to settle upon the waste lands under that system. Objections had been urged against various clauses of the Bill. Several honorable members had argued that the price was too high. The upset price of deferred-payment land at present was, as everybody knew, £3 an acre; but it was put up at auction and sometimes knocked down for as much as £10 an acre. He was at a sale a few months ago, and, when the persons who had lodged their applications were brought up to bid, they did so with such rapidity that he really

thought they would shake their heads off. Surely it would be an improvement on the present system that the price should be reduced to 30s. an acre. In Otago, at all events, such a reduction would be considered a very great boon, and he had no hesitation in saying that he knew districts that would be settled, if such a reduction were made, but which would otherwise remain in the hands of the pastoral tenants, or pass away as freeholds at £1 an acre. Of course there was a great diversity in the quality of land in this country, and it was only reasonable to suppose that poor land should bring a small price; but it was not poor land that was supposed to be opened up under the deferred-payment system. It was the best land, and, unless the persons who took up land this way got land of fair quality, it was impossible for them to make a living out of it. Formerly the Provincial Councils used to send up resolutions which they thought would meet the requirements of their several districts; but the Provincial Councils had been done away with, and it would appear to him, from some of the arguments advanced that evening, that it was a matter for regret that those bodies had been abolished, and if the question now were before the House those honorable gentlemen might not again vote for Abolition. The remarks that had been made showed that this was not simply a technical Bill, as stated by the honorable member for New Plymouth. The Bill embodied some large principles in it. It was stated by the honorable member for Motueka that the residence clause should be dispensed with. He dissented entirely from the honorable gentleman on that point, and thought the Legislature had, if anything, been too remiss with regard to residence. They did not want the people to take up land for speculative purposes, but for the purpose of settling upon it. He knew that at the commencement of the system, when the price was 25s. per acre, many single men took up sections, and kept them for years in the expectation of selling them at a profit. He also knew districts which were populated very much by single men. This was a great drawback, because the settlers who had children could not get them educated. From what he knew of the deferred-payment system, he would almost go so far as to say that the State should assist no man to get land unless he was married. Then he noticed that the honorable member for Dunstan made some remarks on the 2nd subsection of clause 3, which the honorable gentleman did not appear to understand very well. The honorable gentleman seemed to labour under the impression that any person who had hitherto taken up land, say, to the extent of 200 acres, could take up 120 additional acres: but that was not contemplated. Some districts had been surveyed into small allotments of 70, 80, and 90 acres. Under the present law a man could take up only one allotment, no matter whether it was 50 acres or 320 acres. That was the way in which the law was interpreted and administered in Otago. In order to get over the difficulty, it was proposed that any person could take up two or three allotments, provided they did not exceed in the whole 320 acres. It

was also understood not to be desirable that a man should be able to cut a neighbouring allotment into two to make up his deficiency, and take whichever half he chose. He would have to take the whole of it, provided he had not, altogether, more than 320 acres. Of course, if he could cut up the section as he pleased he would take the best part of it, and the rest would probably remain unsold. Again, there was a clause providing that a third of the proceeds of the deferred-payment land should go to the counties as the money accrued. The law at present was that one-third of the deferred-payment agricultural land went to the counties in the first instance. That was to say, before one shilling went into the Treasury the counties got one-third of the proceeds. That was so far good, because the deferred-payment settlers had to go upon the land, and it was very desirable that they should have fair roads; and, unless the counties had the money to make roads, of course the settlers must be put to great inconvenience. He must say he thought the law as it stood was very good in this respect. However, it was proposed in the present Bill to change the law on that particular point. It provided that during the ten years over which the payments extended one-third of the proceeds should go to the counties as the money was paid into the Treasury. It appeared that, in the case of deferred-payment pastoral land, one-third of the proceeds also went to the counties under the present law. But that was really never intended by the Legislature. He was a member of the House at the time the Act was passed, and his understanding of the law was, that in the case of the deferred-payment pastoral land the whole of the proceeds were to go into the Colonial Treasury. He understood that that point was brought under the notice of the Government by the Audit Department. As an instance of the working of the Act, if so interpreted, he might say there was, at the present time, in Otago, a run—No. 369—which had been surveyed, with the intention of selling it as deferred-payment pastoral land. If the Government were to open up this block and sell it, as originally proposed, they must, in the first instance, pay the runholder £10,000 or £12,000 compensation, and would then have to lie out of their money for five years. He had not the exact particulars of the case, but the facts were something as he had stated them. It could not be supposed that the Government should be so liberal as that. Those who came from pastoral districts, and were anxious to see the deferred-payment system extended to those districts, should support the clause in the present Bill; because, if it were not passed, the probabilities were that the deferred-payment pastoral system would not be taken advantage of to the extent it would be if the law were altered. Then he might explain the 6th clause, to which the Minister of Lands had not referred. The law at present was not very explicit, but the way it was interpreted was that, when a run was sold, the purchaser of the lease paid in advance one year's rent, beginning from the 1st March following the date of sale, and he also paid rent at the same

rate, from the date on which the lease was sold, up to the 1st March following. Supposing a run was sold in April, as they were last year, the purchasers had to pay very nearly two years' rent. But that was not what was intended by the Act of 1877. What was understood was that, in the case of runs that were under lease, the purchaser of the lease should pay one year's rent, commencing on the 1st March following; but that, in the case of runs not under lease, the purchaser, in addition to the year's rent, should pay rent up to the 1st March; because, in the case of unoccupied land, the purchaser could go upon it at once, and therefore it was only reasonable that he should pay rent for it. However, the law having been interpreted as he had stated, the purchasers of leases had to pay very nearly two years' rent—in some instances amounting to nearly £800. This, of course, prevented men of more moderate means going in and bidding for the country. It was therefore thought advisable that a change should be made in the law, and that the purchaser should pay half a year's rent in the case of land under lease, and, in the case of land not under lease, he should pay that, and also rent from the date of sale up to the 1st of March following. Before sitting down, he would again refer to the village-settlement clauses. It was the intention of the late Government to devote considerable attention to the settlement of the country. He himself had thought for years past that there was too great a tendency on the part of the people in this country to congregate in towns. This was particularly noticeable in the case of immigrants arriving in our large cities after a long sea voyage. When they got on shore everything was pleasant to them. They knew people in the town, and they began to like town life better than country life. It was within his own knowledge that this was the case even with country people. Now, he thought it was the duty of the Legislature to do all it could to get people settled on the lands—to use every possible means to induce people to take up allotments of land, even if they were only an acre in extent. It was the intention of the late Government to give unusual facilities in this respect. The honorable member for the Buller had spoken of the Governor as being too much in the Bill. Now, the hand of the Governor was not much in this Bill. But in the Bill which was drafted—the Village Settlements Bill—the hand of the Governor was everywhere—the Government could do everything. It was proposed to give people land not exceeding fifty acres, and the conditions were to be such as the circumstances of the case would justify. They were to get land on very easy terms, and, if they could not or did not feel inclined to purchase it, they could lease it on favourable terms; and considering that the quantity of land which the Government intended to take in this way to settle people upon was only 200,000 acres—even supposing large sums were not realized for it, and supposing the hand of the Governor was in it everywhere—if they could get people to take up either five, ten, or fifty acres, and live upon it and make homes

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for themselves, a very great work would be accomplished. He knew that some of their best and wealthiest settlers in Otago had commenced with ten acres, and he supposed the same could be said with regard to Canterbury and other places. They commenced on ten acres, lived on it for a few years, and when the world prospered with them they went out further into the wilderness, bought larger areas of land, and brought it under cultivation, and sold it perhaps to neighbours on very reasonable terms, thus doing good to themselves and to others. Although he did not say they should hold out inducements to men to sell their properties—he did not believe in that by any means—yet he knew that in this way many of our old settlers had prospered; and, if it was good years ago, he did not see why it should not be good still. He hoped the House would agree to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SEYMOUR wished to add his testimony to that of others who had spoken on this measure with reference to the price of land. He considered the price was very much too high, and he would briefly explain why he thought so. The honorable gentleman whose name appeared at the head of the Bill had told them how great was the competition at certain sales of land on deferred payments in his part of the country, and, from his very graphic description of the circumstances of the competition, he (Mr. Seymour) was quite sure that a lower initial price would have made no difference—that was to say, that, whatever might have been the first price offered at the auction, with such a competition as the honorable gentleman described the land would have realized its full and fair value. He might say, before going further, that if the honorable gentleman would be prepared to alter the title of the Bill he would say no more about it. If he would call the measure the "Otago Agricultural Land Bill," they would understand what they were discussing. But he took it that this Bill should be of a much more general character, and that there were many millions of acres in the colony which were not of such a description as the land referred to by the honorable gentleman. And when the honorable member said that land sold on deferred payments was of the best and richest quality, he (Mr. Seymour) must directly take issue with him. In other parts of the country they were not so favoured by Nature, and he believed that the Crown Lands Sale Act which was passed in the session of 1877 had already very materially diminished the sales of Crown lands and retarded settlement in the outlying districts of a very large part of the colony. This was notably the case in the north of the Middle Island—both in the Provinces of Nelson and Marlborough, and on the West Coast—and in the North of Auckland. Considering the large extent of country which existed in those portions of the colony, and the fact of its being of a more or less hilly and broken character and very much covered with forest, he thought a lower upset price would materially encourage settlement. No harm could be done, because it was provided that in the disposal of land on deferred payments proper provision

should be made for settlement; and, for his part, he really could not see why those who, on purchasing their land, were compelled to live upon it and to execute certain improvements as time went on, should be called upon to pay a higher price than was paid in cash by other purchasers. He had no more to say with reference to this measure than briefly to allude to some remarks which had been made concerning the Waste Lands Boards. He was quite certain they could not do without Waste Lands Boards unless they had one uniform price and no auction system. He knew from experience that members of those bodies constantly brought to the assistance of the Board very valuable local information as to the character and value of lands. The reports sent in by the surveyors were very incomplete, and in most cases very meagre, and the local knowledge of the members of Waste Lands Boards had in times past been of the utmost service in fixing the value of land where it was to be assessed at anything above the minimum price.

Mr. ORMOND said they had passed so rapidly from subjects of an entirely different character, and had so unexpectedly got into a debate on the question of land, that the subject was not engaging so much attention at the hands of the House as it deserved. In addressing himself to it, which he proposed to do very briefly, he would first observe that he thought his honorable friend the Minister of Lands would have done better with his subject if he had deferred the second reading of this measure until he had elaborated a Land Bill of his own and brought it down; for he (Mr. Ormond) agreed entirely with those honorable gentlemen who described this Bill as a purely technical one. He confessed he had not given that attention to the measure which he would have done had he had any idea that such a subject was coming on for discussion that evening; but a very cursory examination of its provisions showed that it in no degree dealt in the way the House would have to deal with this very important subject. He ventured to assert that all the so-called liberal measures were of but small importance in the opinion of the country as compared with this measure; and, of all the questions which the House had to deal with, this was the one to which the country was looking with the greatest attention. To look at this Bill and call it a Land Bill for the country was simply an absurdity. He thought that the debate, so far as it had gone that evening, had had some effect in giving the Minister of Lands some idea of the different principles which should be considered in framing a Land Bill; and he hoped the course the honorable gentleman would pursue would be to take the second reading of this Bill, if he desired to have it read a second time, and then bring down his own scheme—which he (Mr. Ormond) hoped would be something very different from this—and take the debate on that scheme, when the motion for the committal of this Bill came on. He said at once that such a Bill as the present would in no way satisfy him, and he would not be at all prepared to accept it as the Land Bill which the country wanted. Generally he would say that the Land

Bill, to be satisfactory, must be of a most liberal character. It must extend the deferred-payment system to such a degree as would bring about real settlement on the land: that was what was wanted. He would suggest to the Minister of Lands whether it was not absolutely necessary, as the first step towards dealing with the land question for the future, to repeal the Crown Lands Sale Act. To his mind, ever since that Act had passed the effect had been to stop all settlement on the land. There had been no settlement on the land since that Act had become law, and, of all the Acts of the late Government, none, in his opinion, had been so detrimental to the advancement and progress of the country as the Crown Lands Sale Act. Therefore he hoped that the repeal of that Act would be the first step taken in dealing with this question. The question of deferred payments and of the terms on which the system was to be established was glanced at by the Minister of Lands in moving the second reading of this Bill, and that honorable gentleman clearly had in his mind an altogether different measure from this. He not only spoke of the necessity of providing for settlement on deferred payments by individuals, but also of giving facilities to associations. Now, he (Mr. Ormond) had had some experience in the working of these associations, and he was very strongly of opinion that that was perhaps the best way of settlement on the deferred-payment system — that the assistance which men gave to each other in that class of settlement by being collected together, occupying a block of country, was very great, and particularly in bushy country. And in connection with this subject there were a great number of details which he would not trouble the House with now, but which, being interested in the subject, and having recently met a great many persons who were also interested in it, he had rather carefully gone into; and he would be very glad to communicate with the Minister of Lands when that gentleman was sketching out the Bill which he (Mr. Ormond) hoped he would bring down to the House. The question of special settlements was one worthy the consideration of the House. He knew there were differences of opinion on this subject; but he was one of those who thought a great deal of good had been done by the special-settlement system in certain places, and that, by continuing that system and giving facilities for its extension, great advantage would result, not only to persons already living in the country, but also to those who were brought into the colony with the object of settling the land on such a system. With regard to the administration of the lands, he confessed that there was some objection to the Waste Lands Board system; but he was not at all sure that they would improve that by doing away altogether with the local body. He did not go so far as to agree with those honorable gentlemen who had expressed the opinion that by getting rid of the Waste Lands Boards, and having a large number of Commissioners all over the country, they would meet the difficulties of the case. The Waste Lands Boards were established with the view of securing

Mr. Ormond

local assistance in the administration of the waste lands. He was aware that in certain isolated localities a strong feeling had arisen against Waste Lands Boards; but, on the whole, he did not think they had worked disadvantageously. It was, of course, a question whether they might not with advantage contain some elective principle. All these matters, however, were, he thought, of less importance than the main principle of at once so altering the price of land all over the colony that it should assimilate in some degree to the absolute value of the land itself. That was the first great step towards settling the country. The other was the establishment of deferred payments on such a liberal system as would bring about the settlement of the country. He did not think there was any advantage in going on further with the discussion of this measure. They would have to debate it and go into it very thoroughly when they had the kind of Bill which he hoped his honorable friend was going to bring down.

Mr. SPEIGHT only wished to speak upon one matter in connection with this Bill. That was the price of land on deferred payment. The difficulty that presented itself, not to his mind alone, but to those of many other persons who were desirous for years to settle on the land on deferred payments, was that, so long as the land laws required that 50 per cent. should be added to the regular upset price, so long they would not be able to settle on the first-class lands of the colony. That being the case, and this Bill coming so suddenly before them, perhaps it was desirable now to face the difficulty which they would ultimately have to face. He hoped that the 3rd clause would be so amended, not, as had been suggested, by reducing the price much lower throughout the colony, but in the direction that each waste lands district should fix the minimum, differing according to the quantity and quality of the land in the district. It was absurd to suppose that they could have a price that would prevail all over the colony with equity. All legislators for years past had been talking about the settlement of the people on the land, but very few had gone in the direction of carrying it out. A man for cash could buy land for a certain price, and could let the land lie in the hope of selling at a profit. But the man who bought on deferred payments had to go on the land and live upon it. He had to make certain improvements which the man who bought for cash had not, besides paying half as much again for it. He believed it would pay the Government and the colony immensely better if they gave the land at half-price on deferred payments to the person who improved and settled on it, than if they sold to the cash purchaser, who was not going to do so. It might not pay as a cash transaction, but in the long run it would be better for the colony. The present price of land on deferred payments was, to his mind and to that of others anxiously wishing to settle, absolutely prohibitive; and it would pay such persons better in a large majority of instances to borrow money from the money-lender and buy the land for cash. The abolition of the Waste Lands Boards was cried for in some parts of the colony

with a strong voice indeed. All radical changes of that kind required great thought before they were effected. He did not think it advisable to take such a step to remedy the evils that undoubtedly did exist, but an alteration in the composition of these Boards was highly necessary. He had one Waste Lands Board in his mind's eye at the present moment, where every member, with one exception, was a city man; and men from country districts who wished to settle on the land had to get the ear of a city man in order to obtain land at all. Those Boards should be made elective, and the various districts should be represented. The Act of 1877 contemplated such a thing, because it provided for travelling expenses, and in many instances he believed that provision was utilized; but in other instances it was not. The result was, that persons were nominated by the Governor to those Boards who were the largest land-jobbers the country possessed. Those were crying evils. He thought the elective system would meet the case. If that could not be done, the people who abolished the provinces and brought into existence the County Councils should utilize those Councils to the fullest extent, and make them Land Boards for their own districts. Land agents should be appointed in each district in which there was land to be sold, and such agents should have control of all necessary plans. At present, if a man wished to see the plans of any land, he had to travel miles and miles before he could do so. Plans of land to be sold might also be kept in Resident Magistrates' Courts and the offices of Receivers of Land Revenue. The honorable member for New Plymouth seemed to think that the system of deferred payments should be continued without the residential condition. That was a nice point. No doubt some men would put a proxy on the ground to do the work; but there was this view of the case also: If a man showed a genuine desire to become a colonist by undertaking the hard work of bringing the virgin soil into cultivation, he should receive every encouragement, and should receive substantial advantages over those who took up land for merely speculative purposes. The fact of a man showing such a desire by residing on the land ought always to be an argument in favour of his receiving such advantages. The honorable member for Clutha decried special settlements as not attaining the end for which they were designed. But, according to what he (Mr. Speight) knew and had read concerning them, they were very desirable; and he thought it would pay the country remarkably well if they could introduce men of small capital, with stout hearts and strong right arms, who were willing to go into special settlements with their own countrymen, with people of their own religious persuasion, or with others having some bond of union. He would give such people exactly the same advantages as he would give to those who took up land on deferred payments. It might be a bold statement, but he honestly believed it would pay the country better to give such people land at one-third its present price than to keep it in hand and sell it afterwards at a fictitious price. The settlement of people on

the lands was the only way to settle their national difficulties. He thought it would be very desirable to have a uniform Bill brought down, dealing with all those subjects, and to let this Bill drop, unless it was intended to make it a local Bill for the Province of Otago.

Mr. IRELAND thought a very large number of honorable members were in favour of a return to the old system of dealing with land on deferred payments: that was, in cases where more applications than one were received for the same section, it should be dealt with by ballot instead of by auction. Under that system land had been rapidly taken up in his own district; but, when it was altered, he found the deferred-payment sections were rarely taken up by men who could really carry out the improvements. Under the auction system he believed many purchasers gave far more than the land was worth, thus impoverishing themselves and rendering them incapable of making the improvements required. He would suggest that the County Councils should be utilized as Waste Lands Boards.

Mr. GISBORNE hoped the Minister of Lands would devise some means by which the Bill, in the shape in which he wished to bring it before the House, would be discussed in the House, instead of being brought in piecemeal in Committee. There were two or three principles which he would suggest to his honorable friend in extending the operation of this Bill. He thought there was no necessity for what was called uniformity in the land laws of the colony. The object of the land laws was to promote settlement. People in different districts were living under different conditions with regard to the occupation of the land; so that obviously the best way to promote their settlement was to provide land laws most suitable to their varying circumstances. Therefore he hoped his honorable friend would not be misled by any idea that it was a good thing for settlement that there should be a dull, level uniformity of land laws throughout the colony. With regard to the deferred-payment system he thought it was a great mistake to put too high a price upon deferred-payment land. What was the object of deferred payment? The object was to secure the settlement of the land. Now, by putting too high a price on that land that object was, in a great measure, defeated. People with small means who wished to obtain land, not for speculation, but with the object of becoming *bonâ fide* settlers, were deterred by the high price put upon deferred-payment land. If they could procure settlement by giving the land away he believed it would be a good thing for the colony. If they could not do that, the less they charged for the land, so as to secure its settlement, the better it would be for the country. There was another important matter with regard to deferred-payment land. They should open up that land by roads before putting it up for sale. The great defects in the Auckland system were that, although the people could get land-orders for a certain quantity of land, and could exercise those land-orders, they were not obliged to improve the land or to reside upon it, and there were no roads opening up the land. People took up

land in all sorts of places, and never settled upon it. If they tried to settle upon their allotments they could not do so remuneratively to themselves, and consequently the whole thing was a failure. The proper way to secure settlement was to make roads giving access to the land. A sum had been placed on the estimates last year for opening up lands available for settlement by means of roads. He should like to see that sum doubled, because if they had roads opening up the country, and then sold the land after those roads had been formed, they would secure settlement in an infinitely greater degree than if they sold the land without providing any access to it. He coincided with the honorable member for New Plymouth in thinking that the residential condition might be waived in certain cases. There were probably many special cases in which that condition should be recognized; but there were many cases in which a person engaged in his particular occupation might wish to prepare a home for himself and his family to settle upon after he had given up that occupation. Why should he not devote his profits to improving the land taken up under the deferred-payment system, without being actually obliged to reside on the land itself? The waiving of that clause in mining districts would work very well in the case of persons engaged in mining. The miner who wished ultimately to settle upon the land and prepare a place for himself and his family should be allowed to engage in mining industry, and devote a portion of the profits to improving the land. In that way they would really secure the settlement of the country. If they imposed residence, the miner would have to give up his mining occupation, and throw all his energies and industry on the settlement of the particular allotment of land. Probably, at the time, and under the circumstances, he would not be inclined to do that. If they allowed him to devote the profits of mining to the cultivation and improvement of a portion of the land for the future settlement of himself and his family, they would secure the object they had in view, which they would not by adopting the other course. As to Land Offices, he did not think the present Waste Lands Boards worked as well as the original system of having Commissioners of Crown Lands. If these officers disagreed with the Government, they could be dismissed. It was not usual to appoint gentlemen upon Waste Lands Boards, and remove them because they would not carry out some particular view of the Government with regard to the sale of land. They were in quite a different position from officers of the Civil Service. He was not prepared to say exactly at this moment whether reverting to the old system of having merely Commissioners of Crown Lands, or whether having elective Boards, would be better. He thought the present system was not working well throughout the colony. But there was a much more important thing than that to consider. They ought to have some means of enabling people living in outlying districts to buy land without being obliged to apply at some distant central office. There should be an officer appointed in each district to whom persons desiring

to obtain land on the deferred-payment system could apply. People who had used their knowledge in selecting land they would like to occupy, instead of being able to go to a local officer in the district to apply for the land on the deferred-payment system, were obliged to apply at some central place in which there was a Waste Lands Board. The result was, that speculators bought up the land for speculative purposes, and thus prevented people selecting land with the view of occupying it. If the Minister of Lands would facilitate settlement by enabling persons in outlying districts to apply directly to some local officer to get land for purposes of settlement, it would be a great public boon to the colony. With regard to special settlements, he believed the reason why special settlements had failed was, that there had been no proper caution used in the formation of these settlements. Unsuitable places were selected, and unsuitable settlers sent there. Where associations had formed special settlements they have been successful. He might instance the Feilding Settlement, in the Wellington District, and the Katikati Settlement at Tauranga. He thoroughly approved of the formation of special settlements, if caution were used in selecting suitable places and suitable people—places where the people could work either on public works or otherwise, and obtain the means of improving the land. If people were associated under a local body or company, such as the two associations he had just named, he believed they would secure the elements of success in the formation of special settlements. Once they had formed the nucleus of a special settlement, that successful nucleus would spread itself throughout the country, and do more to settle the neighbouring waste lands of the country than any direct means of selling the land. By adapting the laws to the circumstances of the country, by facilitating the obtaining of land on deferred payment, by multiplying Land Officers throughout different parts of the country, and also by taking proper precautions with regard to the formation of special settlements, his honorable friend would be able to do great work in the advancement of colonization in this country.

Captain RUSSELL wished to allude to one or two points in the Bill. He admitted that there was very great difficulty in regard to the constitution of Waste Lands Boards. Great objections had been raised by a great many people to the constitution of these Boards. For his own part he would very much prefer to see these Boards elective. The people would never be satisfied till they had a voice in these matters. There was a belief among the people that the Waste Lands Boards were composed of nominees of the Government of the day—that they were always in the interest of large proprietors, and that the smaller class of people had not the same opportunities of getting land as their more prosperous neighbours. He did not say that was the case, but it was as well to take into consideration the prejudices of the people on that point. With regard to the deferred-payment land, he thought it would be well if they removed altogether the clause compelling residence upon the land. He did not see

what possible good there could be in compelling people to live on the land so long as they improved it, and brought it into a proper state of cultivation, and made it reproductive. It did not matter much whether the owner resided on the land so long as a certain quantity of produce could be raised from it for the benefit of the country. He confessed he would like to see this requirement of residence abolished altogether. The people who were most anxious to become occupiers of deferred-payment land were those who at present occupied positions as ploughmen, or were engaged in agricultural pursuits, or men who were first-class shepherds. They were very anxious to take up land; but the question which arose with regard to residence was this: Although these men might be very good at agriculture, or in the pursuits to which he had alluded, it did not at all follow that they were good bushmen, or that they could perform the work of felling trees so profitably as they could perform the duties of their present occupations. Often, in fact, it was most unprofitable to them to attempt to do that work; and a law was wanted which would enable them, while continuing in the employ of the large employer of labour at remunerative wages, to employ those who were able to fell timber, and perform such work, at a lower rate of wages, and who probably would be able to do the work of bushmen much more profitably than those other persons. Residence should not be insisted on in such cases. So, again, there were many men with families who were anxious that their children should be resident in some locality where they might attend school; but in the early days of special settlements there were no schools: and this was another reason why a residential clause should not be insisted upon. It was assumed, as a first principle, that deferred-payment land should be low in price. He did not agree that land sold on deferred payments should be sold cheap. He should prefer to see it maintained at the price of ordinary waste lands of the Crown. The people should be put upon thoroughly good land, and then they could afford to pay a good price. As for saying, as the honorable member for Dunstan had said, that there was land in his district which would be dear to purchase at 2s. 6d. per acre, he would like to know—

Mr. PYKE.—I said there were instances in which land of better value had been sworn in the Land-Tax Courts not to be worth 2s. 6d. per acre to purchase.

Captain RUSSELL supposed, then, that the land to which the honorable gentleman had been referring was only worth 2s. per acre. If that were the case, that was not the sort of land the Government should put men upon for the reason that the first cost of the land was comparatively nothing. No person who had a practical acquaintance with farming would deny that by the time the land had been fenced and stock placed upon it, or the land laid down in crop, the first cost, whether it were 2s. 6d. per acre or £1 per acre, would be quite insignificant. On this ground, the Government ought to endeavour so to place people on the land that they have good land,

even if they had to pay £1 or £2 per acre for it. Then came the point which had caused him to rise. He thought that in any Land Act to be brought in there ought to be clauses providing that the money paid by settlers under the deferred-payment system should be expended entirely in the making of roads connecting their settlements with the main arterial roads of the colony. He knew that at the present time under existing laws this would be impossible; but it was absolutely absurd to go on as at present. Give a man the best land that could possibly be given to him,—let him grow the richest of crops,—unless you give a road to connect him with the market the land was absolutely valueless. He believed it would be a great inducement to settlers to make their payments regularly—because it could not but be acknowledged that one of the great difficulties of deferred payment was, that settlers could not be got to make their payments regularly—if it were known that when the instalments were paid they went towards the road. Not only would the settler himself be willing to pay, but there would be such a strong public opinion among the settlers that every person would be compelled to pay up. Of that he was firmly convinced; and, after all, the money which could be derived from special settlements would not be more than sufficient to connect them with the arterial roads. These settlements would not, for the present, at any rate, be near the centres of civilization. He believed that the centres of civilization would increase, and come nearer to these settlements; but at present there were many difficulties to contend with, and all the money that could be collected from the sales of land in these settlements would be required to connect them with the centres. Unless that were done he believed special settlements would not succeed. If one or two such settlements were shown to have succeeded, their number would be greatly increased; but this could not be done unless some chance of prosperity was given them through being connected with the centres of population.

Mr. ROLLESTON, in reply, said he was not at all sorry the discussion on this Bill had taken place, not merely because it was refreshing to have a practical discussion after the debates of the last few weeks, but because he believed it had enabled the Government to gather very much of what were the opinions of members from different parts of the country as to what should be the provisions of a Bill which he hoped to submit to the House on a future occasion. The real point of the debate was taken by the honorable member for Clive. The fact was, that in 1877 the House began to legislate confessedly temporarily by the passing of the Crown Lands Sale Act, and any fresh legislation must start from the repeal of that Act. There could be no doubt it had had a most mischievous effect. At the time it was passed he entered a distinct protest against the Bill as one that would be most mischievous—a Bill which would stop the sale of land and impede settlement throughout the country; and it was therefore satisfactory to him to occupy the position he did, and to be able to suggest to the

House the repeal of that Act in a new Land Act which would be submitted to the House. Any Land Act which was a progressive measure must begin with that. The other provisions that the country was looking for came under two or three heads, to which members on both sides of the House had alluded. First of all, the greatest facilities were wanted for a general deferred-payment system throughout the colony. There were wanted, in addition to that, powers to establish other association settlements of a special character, such as that at Katikati; further, power was wanted to establish, under the deferred-payment system, other land-occupying associations, such as working-men's clubs, so as to give the advantages of the deferred-payment system to bodies of people who were bound together in the manner these associations were. Then came the question of village settlements, which had been spoken of by the honorable member for Port Chalmers. That was a different class of settlement from those previously alluded to. Both ordinary deferred-payment settlers and special settlers would have to come strictly within the waste land laws on the subject; but in the matter of these village settlements, established in connection with public works and immigration, considerable power must be intrusted to Ministers of the Crown responsible to the House. That was the only way in which they would get these settlements satisfactorily established, because the circumstances of these settlements would be exceedingly various in different parts of the country. A tentative method dealing with those settlements would have to be adopted—that was, they would have to be dealt with according to the special circumstances of each case, and very considerable latitude must be left to the Ministry of the day, acting through the Works, Immigration, and Lands Departments. It would be no improvement to keep that class of settlement out of the Land Bill. In the past they had had very considerable difficulty to understand their land laws, because they had been scattered through different Acts. Any one outside New Zealand had the greatest difficulty in ascertaining what the law was; and he thought these special settlements, speaking from his own knowledge and experience of them, were a step towards a further system, and were a portion of a whole system that could not properly be separated from it. They brought in people, and, in order to enable them to settle, they gave them special privileges for settlement. They had their location, and naturally spread out from that location on to lands which would come under the more general deferred-payment principle. He hoped he would have the assistance of the honorable member for Port Chalmers in maturing a measure such as he was sure both the honorable gentleman and himself wished to see passed. Both of them in the past had devoted very considerable time and attention to the question of immigration and settlement, and, he believed, with considerable effect. He should be sorry to see the village settlements he had named in the other portion of the Bill separated from the Bill. He did not agree with the point raised by the honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutchison).

Mr. Rolleston

That honorable member said, "You are separating your Electoral Bills: why not separate the different provisions of the Land Bill?" The reason of the Government for separating the different provisions of the Electoral Bills was, that they felt they could be very well separated, and they did not wish to imperil the whole by grouping them in one Bill. After the several electoral measures became law, no doubt the first step taken would be to consolidate them. They had gone in for the consolidation of their land laws, and he should be very sorry to see the provisions of this Bill split up into a number of Acts, which would not be so advantageous to the colony as if they were included in one measure. He would not detain the House any further. They had got some work to do, and he hoped they would get through further business that night. The course which he proposed to adopt with regard to this Bill was this: He had given a sketch of the view he held with regard to the amended Land Bill, and the general principles that should guide it. It would contain, of course, the same provisions that were in this Bill, and he thought they should be grouped together, and that the Bill would assume a much more general form than this Bill. He proposed that that Bill should be brought before the Waste Lands Committee; so that when it was brought back to the House it might appear with the amendments introduced in that Committee; and then the discussion on the main principles of the Bill would take place. He hoped this would meet the wishes of the House, and with these observations he begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

AUCKLAND LOANS CONSOLIDATION BILL.

Mr. W. J. HURST, in moving the second reading of this Bill, explained that it merely proposed to carry out the same principles which were expressed in the two Acts passed in the General Assembly in 1877 and 1878.

Mr. STEVENS would like to receive an assurance from the honorable gentleman that this Bill did not override the provisions with regard to special loans laid down by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1876. Having looked carefully into the Bill, it appeared to him that it had that effect, and that the Mayor and City Council of Auckland would be placed in a special position with regard to raising loans under this Bill without having to go through the form of law already provided, by which a poll of the ratepayers had to be taken, and their assent given to the proposed loan. The House should pause before it passed this Bill without some reason being given for it. He had hoped that his honorable friend would have given some explanation before the House was invited to take so strong a step as he now proposed. No doubt the consolidation, and possibly the conversion, of the Auckland City loan was desirable; but the House was bound to see that the law which was passed for the protection of the ratepayers with regard to special loans should be strictly carried out.

Mr. SEDDON would ask the honorable gentle-

man to adjourn the debate, as this was a very large question, and he and other members had not had time to go into the details, owing to circumstances of which the House was very well aware. He should move, That the debate be adjourned till Thursday.

Mr. MURRAY thought the Bill might be advanced a stage, as it was one of considerable importance to the people of Auckland, if the honorable gentleman in charge of it would agree to postpone the committal in order to enable honorable members to look into the matter. The only objections that could be raised to it were such as could be dealt with in Committee.

Mr. W. J. HURST explained that the Bill, as constructed, did bear out the interpretation put upon it by the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Stevens), that it took power to borrow to a further extent of £125,000. There was, however, a certain portion of that—£50,000—which the City Corporation had already a right to borrow, but that right they had not yet exercised. There was also a Bill before the House at present which proposed to hand over the city improvements to the Corporation, and it would be necessary to provide that body with funds to the extent of £30,000 to carry out the work. That would leave only £45,000 to the Corporation for other works, and that was little enough. He proposed to alter the Bill in Committee, so that the borrowing power of the Corporation should be subject to the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act. He might mention that a meeting of Auckland members had been held to consider the matter, and the general opinion was, that the Corporation should not have the power given them in the Bill as at present drafted. In that opinion he concurred, and consequently he would alter the provisions in Committee. He trusted the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) would not oppose the second reading, and he would postpone the committal for a week, so as to give the honorable gentleman and others time to study the Bill. He did not desire to pass the Bill until the Auckland Improvement Commissioners Bill was passed, as the necessity for it was contingent on the passing of that measure.

Mr. HALL trusted that, after the explanation of the honorable gentleman, the House would agree to the second reading of the Bill. Its main principle was the consolidation of the Auckland loans, which was a very desirable object to attain. Whether to that should be added a power of increasing those loans was another question, which could be very well considered in Committee.

Adjournment of the debate negatived.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR would ask the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill whether there was any general knowledge on the part of the Auckland ratepayers that these large borrowing powers were to be asked for, because he was not aware that they had been consulted, or that the intention had been advertised. He would not oppose the second reading, but he would like the honorable gentleman to tell the House where the Bill came from. It might be an emanation of the honorable gentleman's own mind, or it might come from the Municipal Council. Perhaps the

honorable gentleman would satisfy honorable members on these points when he replied.

Mr. HISLOP thought the House should take into consideration two principles that seemed to be involved in this Bill: first, whether the House was going to pass special legislation with regard to Corporations in the face of "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1876;" and, secondly, whether the House would allow such a power to be vested in the Corporation as was provided by the 11th section, in order to get out of a temporary difficulty. That section allowed them to buy up all previous loans upon such terms as to them might seem expedient. If there was one thing that the House should guard against more than another, it was the granting of extended borrowing powers to these Corporations. He believed every municipal body in New Zealand felt at the present time the evil effects of too much borrowing. This borrowing was often carried out at the instigation of some person who might get into the Corporation like a bird of passage, and the principle was one which the House ought not to accept without very careful consideration. He did not want to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but would certainly oppose many of its provisions in Committee; and probably when it had gone through that stage the honorable gentleman would find that it would not carry out the purposes of the Corporation.

Mr. SPEIGHT would only say that the Bill was urgently needed. There was certainly one provision in it that the House should not pass, but, on the assurance of the honorable gentleman in charge of it that he would alter that provision in Committee, the second reading ought to be agreed to. The Bill, from his own knowledge, was desired by the City Council for the benefit of the whole of the inhabitants of Auckland, and he believed it would have such an effect, if passed, with the exception of the one clause he had referred to, which could very easily be set right.

Mr. MOSS only wished to make one remark. He apprehended that the honorable gentleman would not ask power to borrow the money requisite to pay off the City Improvement Commissioners' debt until the Bill affecting that body was passed; because he (Mr. Moss), for one, would be very sorry to see that measure pass without due consideration—a Bill to hand over to the City of Auckland certain endowments, which he hoped the Government would see their way to take for purposes of education instead. He hoped the honorable gentleman would not press this Bill through Committee, at all events, until the Auckland Improvement Commissioners Bill had been dealt with.

Mr. W. J. HURST, in reply, said he had distinctly stated that he did not desire to pass this Bill through the House until the Auckland Improvement Commissioners Bill had been disposed of; because the power to obtain £30,000, which it was proposed to give the Council, was entirely contingent upon the passage of that Bill. With regard to the remarks of the honorable member for Mount Ida, the honorable member for Auckland City East had, he thought, given an explanation which would be perfectly satisfactory.

He (Mr. Hurst), in taking charge of this Bill, was representing the City Council, and the principle involved in the measure was chiefly the consolidation of loans, and was one which the Council had on more than one occasion already affirmed, and as to the necessity and urgency of which he apprehended no one could possibly have any doubt. The committal of the Bill would not take place till to-morrow week, and honorable members would have ample time to consider its details, and also the question of allowing the City Council to borrow beyond what they were already entitled to borrow.

Bill read a second time.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES BILL.

Mr. TOLE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it contained two principles. The first was with regard to certain doubts which existed in connection with the two existing Acts—the Municipal Corporations Act of 1876 and the Slaughterhouses Act of 1877. By the Corporations Act boroughs had power to erect slaughterhouses either within or without their limits; and “The Slaughterhouses Act, 1877,” did not in its spirit contemplate the power of allowing slaughterhouses to be erected within boroughs, but required that they should be erected at a distance not within half a mile of the outer boundary of a borough. So that there was a collision between the two Acts; and it was to set at rest all doubts on the subject that this Bill had been framed. He believed it was never the intention of the Slaughterhouses Act of 1877 that slaughterhouses should be erected within boroughs, and hence a provision was inserted in this Bill to make that clear. The next provision was to enable the local governing bodies to have a voice in regard to the erection of slaughterhouses within their limits. According to the present Act boroughs had power to erect slaughterhouses and grant licenses for establishments within any Road Board district, and it was at the request of nearly all the Road Boards in and about the suburbs of Auckland that this clause had been introduced. He asked the House to allow the Bill to be read a second time that evening, and, as there were several honorable members who took an interest in the subject, he would not propose to go into Committee on the Bill until to-morrow week, so that honorable members would be able to prepare any amendments they might wish to propose. In all probability he would, in Committee, ask that clause 2 might be expunged, or amended so as to meet not only the views of honorable members who might agree with him in such a course, but also the wishes of persons affected by it. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HALL had hoped that the honorable gentleman would have said that it was the 3rd clause he proposed to expunge, because the law now vested in County Councils the management of slaughterhouses, and the right to say where slaughterhouses in a county should be, and under what regulations they should exist. He understood that the honorable gentleman proposed to alter the law in such a way that a Road Board could negative and set at naught the

authority of a County Council. Now, they should not have two jurisdictions. If the County Council was to decide whether slaughterhouses should be in the county, they must leave it to that body, and, if the County Council was not the proper body to decide, they should select some other body; but there should not be two bodies with powers that, if exercised, must conflict. Therefore he would oppose the 3rd clause in Committee.

Mr. MOSS was glad the Premier objected to the 3rd clause. It was a provision which should not be contained in the Bill in its present form, and he hoped the honorable member for Eden would consent to expunge or alter it. He was acquainted with the particular case to which it referred. There were districts in which the Counties Acts had not been brought into operation, and he presumed that it was to meet such cases that the honorable member who moved the second reading had introduced the clause. It so happened that the provision, if passed into law, would bear with particular hardship upon a borough in the constituency which he (Mr. Moss) represented, and he would be very sorry to see it included, without alteration, in the Act. The 6th clause of “The Slaughterhouses Act, 1877,” said,—

“From and after the coming into operation of this Act no abattoir shall be erected outside of a borough within a distance of half a mile from the outer boundary of such borough, and no license shall be issued in respect of any slaughterhouse situated within the aforesaid limits, unless such slaughterhouse had been erected or was in course of erection for that purpose immediately before the coming into operation of this Act.”

It would be difficult for any one to say where the sense of that clause lay. The borough could not authorize the erection of a slaughterhouse within a distance of half a mile from the outer boundary of such borough. He knew a case in which a borough had authorized the erection of a slaughterhouse on a suitable site where everything was most convenient for a small slaughterhouse, and where one was much needed; but it happened to be within four hundred feet or four hundred yards of half a mile, and for that reason it was objected to. He was not aware that it would have been the slightest nuisance to that place. On the contrary, from all he heard, a small and properly-conducted slaughterhouse would be rather a boon there. He hoped the honorable gentleman would see his way to include in this Bill a provision repealing the 6th clause of the Act of 1877, which was evidently meant to guard against any outside district putting a slaughterhouse, as a nuisance, within half a mile of any borough. That, he believed, was the intention, but the clause was so worded that a borough could not itself authorize the establishment of a slaughterhouse within half a mile, although it could beyond half a mile. The provision as it stood was an absurdity.

Mr. SEDDON said that, in cases of slaughterhouses already erected within boroughs, and where the clauses of the Municipal Corporations Act had been brought into operation with regard to the

Mr. W. J. Hurst

distance within which a slaughterhouse might be erected, the present Bill, if passed, would cause very great expense to the consumer. There was no provision whatever for granting licenses to slaughterhouses already in existence, so that, in boroughs where they had taken the full benefit of the clause in the Municipal Corporations Act, the slaughterhouses would be denied the privilege of having their licenses renewed, and they would have to go nine and a half miles before they could have their meat slaughtered. This was very objectionable, and, as the 2nd and 3rd clauses of the Bill were objected to, he failed to see what groundwork there was to go upon, and why they should pass this Bill.

Colonel TRIMBLE said there was another point, which had been overlooked by the Premier and by the honorable member for Parnell. There was a difficulty which the 3rd clause seemed to meet, but from the way in which it was drawn up it might possibly not attain the object desired. The difficulty was this: A borough had the right to erect a slaughterhouse anywhere within half a mile from the borough. In the district he came from, the effect of that was this: There were only two or three slaughterhouses connected with the borough, and the Corporation had taken no pains whatever to regulate the slaughter of animals at those slaughterhouses. The consequence was, that they were badly conducted. They were not inspected in accordance with the Act: in fact, there was no machinery whatever for paying attention to the slaughterhouses connected with the borough. The County Council, on the other hand, had machinery for inspection, and did inspect all they could. The inspector of the borough, on going to these establishments, was told that he had no jurisdiction. He could not collect fees, nor could he demand the perusal of the books of the butchers; and the consequence was that there was no inspection whatever of the slaughterhouses connected with the Borough of New Plymouth. He apprehended that the honorable gentleman who had introduced this Bill meant to meet some such case as this.

Mr. PYKE would certainly support this Bill very strongly, because a great wrong was done to the counties and the Road Board districts by the Act at present in operation. Section 10 of the existing Act said,—

“The Council of any borough may, without the consent of any County Council, erect and establish outside of the limits of such borough one or more abattoirs for such borough; and every abattoir so established shall, for the purposes of this Act, be deemed to be within the limits of the borough establishing the same, and shall be under the sole control and supervision of the Council of such borough.”

That gave power to boroughs to place these nuisances in districts over which they had no control, without the consent of the governing body which had control over that part of the country. The 3rd section of this proposed Bill directly provided that the local governing body should have power to say whether an abattoir should be constructed. He would be sorry to say he had such things in his mind's eye, but he had a distinct

recollection of several great nuisances caused by boroughs allowing an abattoir to be constructed outside their boundaries, and within the limits of the County Council jurisdiction, contrary to the will and wishes of the inhabitants of the county. He therefore hoped this injustice would be removed, and that the Bill would be agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS suggested that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, so that several very necessary improvements might be made in the existing Act.

Mr. TOLE would take advantage of the suggestion thrown out, and would agree to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. The Counties Act was hung up in the County of Eden, and the county had no power to interfere. It was considered to be a grievance by the Road Boards—numbering eight or nine—who had specially requested that a clause of this kind should be enacted, so that no nuisance might be placed in their midst without their consent. The honorable member for Parnell was only anxious about his borough; but, if his constituents desired to have a slaughterhouse in their midst, the Bill might be shaped so that the power now given under the Municipal Corporations Act might be exercised. But the principle that he (Mr. Tole) contended for was contained in clause 3—the permission of local bodies.

Bill read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.

NAPIER AND MEANEE RECREATION-GROUND BILL.

Captain RUSSELL, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he felt himself in a somewhat unfortunate position in regard to it, as he was aware a petition had been sent down against it. Napier was unfortunately situated in respect to recreation-grounds. It was built on an island in which there was no room for extensive recreation-grounds or a racecourse; but there was a piece of ground three or more miles away, in the direction of Meanee, which was leased by the Government from the Natives in 1866. This piece of land was subsequently leased by the Provincial Council of Hawke's Bay to the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club, under certain conditions. This land, since 1866, with the exception of one or two years, had been devastated by floods, and was not used as a racecourse at all. A certain body of gentlemen in the Town of Napier, thinking the citizens of Napier ought to have the benefit of the land for a racecourse and recreation-ground, drafted this Bill, and asked him to submit it to the House. The Bill provided that the land should be vested in certain trustees; that they should have power to improve the land, to make it a racecourse and recreation-ground, and to charge entrance money on a certain number of days in each year. The opposition to the Bill would hinge upon the question, whether this land did or did not vest in the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club. Another racing club had been formed in Hawke's Bay, and it was practically this club in whom the racecourse would vest. The Hawke's Bay Jockey Club had sent down a petition saying the land was vested in them; but it was urged by the framers of this

Bill that they had forfeited their claim to the land, and that it was advisable to vest it in new trustees. The land was held under the Papakura and Hikutoto Leasing Act, one clause of which provided that, under certain circumstances, if the Superintendent of the Province of Hawke's Bay acquired the freehold to this land, the lessee of the land should have the right to purchase before the expiry of his lease. There was also a clause under which a lease became forfeited for non-payment of rent, or non-performance of any covenant or proviso; and under this clause it was urged that the lease to the old club had been forfeited. This clause provided that,—

"In the event of any lease becoming forfeited on account of non-payment of rent, or for non-performance of any covenant or proviso therein or thereby contained or implied, the right of pre-emption given by the said lease shall be absolutely forfeited and void."

Now, the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club had a lease, but never acquired the right of freehold over the land. An Act was passed in the same year, in the Provincial Council, granting this land to certain trustees. Some of those trustees had either left the province or were dead; and the remaining trustees had failed to appoint other trustees, as provided in "The Hawke's Bay Racecourse Act, 1866," to act in the place of those who had died or been absent for six months from the province; and on that ground it was urged by the promoters of this Bill that the trust had lapsed. There was also another clause which said,—

"It shall be lawful for the said trustees to let from time to time, for any period not exceeding the term of years for which the same is rented by the Provincial Government, all or any portion of the said land, and to fence in the same, and to do all such acts as may be necessary for the management, improvement, and regulation thereof; and to apply all rents received from such land to the following purposes—namely: (1.) To paying to the Provincial Government the annual rental for the same, as provided by this Act; (2.) To paying the expenditure incurred in fencing-in and fitting for the purposes of racing the said piece of land; and (3.) To giving the residue, if any, as a prize to be run for at the annual races to be held on the said racecourse."

There had been no races held there for some time. He had no doubt his honorable friend the member for Wairarapa (Mr. Beetham), who had charge of the petition against the Bill, would urge that the racecourse had been overflowed by the river, and that until last year it was impossible to hold races there, and that the available funds of the club had been spent upon prizes competed for on other racecourses. Still, the fact remained that the Jockey Club had not held races there. It was only right to inform the House that the rent for this racecourse had been paid up to the last half-year. The main fact remained, that the people of Napier had not had the benefit of the recreation-ground and racecourse. This Bill was introduced with the object of placing the land in the hands of trustees who would take a more active interest in the management of it than the late trustees had done. The land had lately

been permanently reserved from sale by notice in the General Government *Gazette*, from which it would appear the Government of the day imagined that the right to this land had lapsed. The real question with regard to this Bill was, whether the right of the Jockey Club had lapsed or not. If it had lapsed, the House could not do better than grant to the trustees proposed in this Bill the right of creating a proper racecourse and recreation-ground on land which had been uncultivated and unused for several years.

Mr. BEETHAM had presented a petition from the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club protesting against this proposal of the honorable member for Napier. He found that the report of the Petitions Committee had not been sent down. He expected that that report would have been before the House, to enable him to found some arguments upon it. He believed the honorable member for Napier had fairly stated the question to the House; but, as the report of the Petitions Committee had not been furnished, he would move the adjournment of the debate until to-morrow week.

Debate adjourned.

JOINT-STOCK COMPANIES BILL.

Mr. STEWART, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said its object was apparent from the 2nd clause, which was a reprint of the provision of an Imperial Statute, and enabled associations to be incorporated under "The Joint-Stock Companies Act, 1860," without the addition of the term "limited." Under the Imperial Act power was given for the purpose contemplated in this Bill.

Mr. HALL would like the honorable gentleman to give some reason why they should be asked to depart from the ordinary rule regarding associations formed for the purposes specified in this Bill. The honorable gentleman might be opening the door a little wider than he meant to do. He (Mr. Hall) should be glad to know what necessity existed for this Bill.

Mr. HISLOP said this Bill was similar to a measure which had been introduced in a previous session, and he hoped it would receive the same treatment as that Bill, and be rejected. He did not see why associations formed for the purpose of promoting commerce, art, science, religion, or charity should not be limited. No special reason had been shown why such a Bill should be passed. He would move, as an amendment, That the Bill be read a second time that day three months.

Mr. MURRAY moved the adjournment of the debate, as honorable members were not prepared to deal with the question, which should be considered in a fuller House.

Mr. PITT hoped the debate would not be adjourned. If the honorable member in charge of the Bill proved to the satisfaction of honorable members that this was a measure which ought to be passed, the House should deal with the matter at once. No good could arise from adjourning the debate. A similar Bill had been before the House in a previous session, and he would like to have some explanation of the reasons which

Captain Russell

acted the House in favour of rejecting that measure.

Mr. STEWART said the object of this Bill was to enable societies of a charitable and semi-religious character to be carried on satisfactorily. The gentlemen connected with those societies, and desirous of promoting their objects, did not care to be associated with them with the word "limited" attached to their name, inasmuch as it would have the appearance that they were purely commercial concerns. They did not care to be connected with a society of this kind, when the outside world would be labouring under the impression that they were participating in the profits of these charitable and religious institutions. For instance, it was thought desirable that the Bible Society should be incorporated and carried on without the word "limited" being attached to the name. In the same way, there were gentlemen desirous of promoting charitable objects who objected to the word "limited." He really could not see what possible objection there could be to a measure of this kind. He was aware that a similar measure was brought forward the session before last, and was not entertained by the House; but, seeing that the Imperial Legislature had passed an Act with this avowed object and express purpose, he did not think the House should object to this Bill. The Imperial Act had proved exceedingly useful in regard to societies whose members had no pecuniary object in view. They could hold property and sue in a corporate name, and enter into contracts. For instance, the Bible Society in Otago could not conveniently enter into any contract, as, if they wished to sue, all the parties interested must be joined, and in the course of twelve months the constitution of that society might vary in several respects through the death or resignation of members. If the Bible Society went into Court it would be met with all kinds of technical difficulties, and might not recover. The object of the Bill was simply to facilitate, in a clear and simple way, the holding of property, the suing for debt, the entering into contracts, and all the other objects which any private individual might desire to carry out. He submitted they ought to agree to the Bill, and, although the honorable member for Waitaki did not seem to go with him, he could show that at Home the Act had been well spoken of, and had served a very good purpose in its way. He was not aware of any Act which could be framed that would be more useful to a large number of charitable institutions which were managed by volunteers, or persons having no pecuniary interest in the institutions themselves beyond being desirous of giving their subscriptions yearly, than this Act. The House would be conferring many advantages by passing the Act, and if it were to be thrown out he would at once say there was an end to all useful legislation.

Mr. W. J. HURST hoped the Bill would be discussed on its merits, and dealt with at once. He did not at all approve of it. He had been at Home in England in 1878, and had seen the effects of a catastrophe which then took place by the failure of the Glasgow Bank, and he assured

the House that the provision which this Act sought to remove was thought a great deal of in England, so much so that it was seriously contemplated to do away with all unlimited companies. What could be more vague than the object of "promoting commerce"?

Mr. BARRON hoped the House would not pass the second reading of the Bill, because the word "limited" had a very valuable and salutary effect. He had read somewhere that sometimes men, like tacks, point upwards when they mean mischief. He looked upon the introduction of the Bill as an insidious attempt to do away with a most necessary provision; and the House should be very careful.

Mr. DICK hoped that honorable members would agree to the adjournment of the debate, more especially as the honorable member for Taieri was absent. He thought a little consideration should be shown. The Bill was intended chiefly to assist religious and charitable associations; and he believed the one which the honorable member for Dunedin City referred to was the Bible and Tract Society, of which the honorable member for Taieri was chairman. Many persons would become shareholders in these associations on the understanding that they should not become liable for unlimited amounts. Some of the objects named in the preamble might be considered objectionable. It might be objectionable to bring under the operation of the Act such interests as the honorable member for Auckland City West had indicated; but there were certain kinds of associations to which the Bill would apply, and if done under proper supervision the provisions of the Bill would be innocuous. But, in courtesy, he thought the debate should be adjourned.

Mr. HISLOP did not know that any courtesy was due to an honorable gentleman who did not stay to do his duty. He presumed it was known by all honorable members that these Bills were likely to come on, and he did not see why, after so much time had been wasted by the other side of the House, any further time should be lost. The main purpose of the Joint-Stock Companies Act would be frustrated if the Bill were passed. He thought the matter should be dealt with at once. No arguments could be brought forward this year that were not brought forward last session. No company, whether formed for religious or other purposes, should evade the provisions of the Joint-Stock Companies Act.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 29th October, 1879.

Exports—Agent-General—Prisons Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

EXPORTS.

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that every year very important returns were laid before Parliament from the Customs respecting the imports, exports, and shipping, and unless those returns were something like reliable they were, of course, of little value, either for reference or for statistical purposes. On looking over the returns of the exports of the colony the other day, his attention was called to the very high value placed upon the exports; and he would just point out a few articles to show what the effect was. In the case of butter the value was placed at 9d. per pound, but the quoted market prices showed that the general value ranged from 6d. to 8d. per pound during the season. In the case of flour the value was put down at £12 per ton; while the rates ranged, according to the prices current, from £10 to £11 per ton. Gold was valued at £4 per ounce; but, although a considerable proportion of the gold might be worth that amount, still there was a great deal exported which was not worth anything like it. He knew the value of the gold produced on some of the gold fields was as low as £3 5s. per ounce. Then, with regard to grain: oats were put down at 4s. per bushel, the current market price at the time being from 3s. to 3s. 6d.; wheat was valued at 5s., while the current price—at any rate, during the season when the shipments took place—ranged from 4s. to 4s. 6d. Another article, hides, was valued at 19s., which was a very high average, the actual value having been as low perhaps as 15s. Leather was valued at 1s. 9d. per pound, which he was quite sure was far beyond the value of the leather which was generally exported from the colony. There was another item in the return which rather puzzled him when he first saw it. It was under the head of menageries. It would seem that the colony exported last year one menagerie, valued at £20,000. He thought this must have been some travelling circus, but on looking at the return of imports he could see that nothing of the sort had been imported. So that he believed the colony was to be congratulated on having found a new export altogether; and if they could only export a few menageries every year of the value of £20,000 each, it would be very satisfactory. However, he supposed there must be some meaning in this item—he did not know whether it was a myth altogether: at any rate the value, £20,000, was a very large one. Potatoes were put down in the return at £4 per ton, while the current market price during the shipping season ranged from 60s. to 65s. Grass seed was valued at 10s. a bushel, while the average price was about 6s. Then there was the item of tallow, an article of considerable export, and of which 5,000 odd tons had been exported during the year. This was valued at £35 15s. per ton; while for a long time past he did not think it had brought such a high price as that in England. At any rate, the value might be safely put down at from £25 to £28 per ton. The next item was wool, which formed a very large proportion of the whole exports of the colony. The value of the wool was declared at, as nearly as possible, 1s. 1½d. per pound, the total value

being £3,292,000. Now, he was sure that any one who knew anything about the value of the wool exported during the past year—and the value of the export must of course be taken as the value here—would agree that, a very small proportion of the exported wool being washed or scoured, the outside value to estimate it at all round would be 11d. per pound. Valuing it at that price, this one item of wool alone was overvalued to the extent of £615,000. The consequence of this overvaluation was that, instead of our exports amounting to £6,015,700, as stated in the return, they in reality only came to a little over five millions of money—perhaps £5,250,000. That was a very large discrepancy indeed, and it was the more important when it was considered how often the exports of the colony were referred to in the Financial Statements. He observed that they were quoted in that very valuable book prepared by Dr. Hector for the Sydney Exhibition, which contained a sliding-scale showing our exports, compared with other colonies, from which it appeared that New Zealand stood very nearly at the head of the list—a position to which she was not entitled. He thought the discrepancies in these returns were such that it was worth while calling the attention of the Government to the matter. Of course the remedy was simply this: that, when the shippers in passing their entries declared the value, it was open to the officers of the Customs to see that that value was something like the real market price of the goods in the colony. If something were not done in this direction it was very certain that, for statistical purposes or for reference, the official return of the value of our exports would be of no use whatever.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that the value of the exports of the colony should be more correctly ascertained by the Customs Department than at present."—(*Hon. Mr. G. Buckley.*)

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER said he found that this matter had been a subject of consideration with the officers of the Customs before. There was a good deal of difficulty about it, because the exporters made their own declarations of value, which there were no effectual means of checking. Instructions, he believed, were issued some time ago—and they would be repeated—that where the officers of the Customs considered there was an overvaluation they should require the exporter to put a new value on the goods. He did not know whether any other system could be adopted which would enable them to arrive at what the honorable gentleman wanted. He admitted, of course, that it was very wrong and very injurious that values should be put upon exports which they really did not bear. No doubt it made it appear that the exports were greater than they were, and that there was less difference between the imports and exports than was actually the case; and, if it could be done, he quite agreed with the honorable member that a remedy ought to be applied. The instructions he had indicated would be issued; and, if anything further could be suggested by which they

could arrive at what was desired, he should be very happy to adopt it.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON said there might be great objection to give to Collectors of Customs the power to alter the declared value of these exports. It might operate in a manner which perhaps honorable gentlemen had not thought of. For instance, at the present time wool was very low indeed; but, with regard to this article, and, in fact, grain, and all the other principal exports, they were looking forward to better prices in the future. These enhanced prices might be anticipated, and the insurances effected accordingly. For example, a gentleman might be shipping wool which, at the present time, might not be worth more than 9d. a pound, but he would have every reason to suppose that his wool would fetch 1s. a pound by the time it reached England, and he would insure it accordingly. Supposing him to be disappointed in his expectation as to the rise in price, or that the wool, through some mishap, did not arrive in England, he was not quite sure whether the fact of a different value being placed on the wool in the colony from that at which it was estimated when the shipper insured it, might not, to some extent, interfere with the settlement of insurance.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE did not think it could be regarded as a crime on the part of the producers of wool that they overstated their valuations. They paid for it, at all events, in their insurance, and that was the best proof that they were honest in their convictions. With regard to overvaluations, if they were overvaluations of the produce of this country, we were in the habit of making our return in a way which was hardly fair to the country: we calculated our produce in the cheapest, and our imports in the dearest market. Consequently, if there was a balance of trade, it would always show against us. He thought the Hon. Mr. Buckley, in alluding to the articles leather and potatoes, had hardly argued the question from an intimate knowledge of the circumstances. Potatoes, he thought, would be found not to be overvalued at 80s.; but, with regard to leather, he might tell the honorable gentleman that the leather which was exported from this country was the very best sole leather that could be produced, and it happened, as he had recently ascertained, that this leather made from the cattle in this country was superior in thickness and in quality to that produced in the Australias, and there was a growing demand for the stoutest sole leather from this country—sole leather which was valued at almost double the price of the ordinary harness leather, and of thinner and less valuable skins. He thought it would be found practically impossible to do more than leave to the exporters themselves the valuation of their own goods; and, inasmuch as they backed their opinions by paying their insurance at the rate at which the goods were valued, he could not think that any reasonable objection on the ground of fraud could be brought against the country: they had nothing to gain by it, and they had more to pay. He therefore thought that, if in this particular instance they might have overvalued their produce, it would be

found that on an average extending over a number of years their valuation was fairly correct. After all, why should we take a great deal of trouble to make our trade look worse than it really was? Was it in the interest of any person in New Zealand? Was it for anything else except to gratify the pride of some other colonies that might appear to show better in their commerce than ourselves? And would it be fair to expose our citizens or our colony to an unfavourable contrast, without the assurance that the same rigorous rule was enforced in those other colonies? He believed that in all these colonies they took the value of the goods as they were declared, and according to the rate at which shippers were willing to pay insurance upon them. It would be most unjustifiable to make this colony an exception to the rule, and to make its trade appear unfavourable in comparison with others. He did not think it would be found practicable; and, if it were practicable, he did not think it would be just to insist upon any further steps to correct the valuations made by the persons themselves on the articles which they produced.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE had listened with a great deal of astonishment to the remarks that fell from the honorable and gallant gentleman, and he was astonished that remarks of such a character could fall from a gentleman who had occupied so prominent a position in the politics of the colony for such a length of time. The honorable gentleman stated that our returns were prepared upon a plan unfavourable to the colony, inasmuch as they showed the minimum of what was received for the produce, and the maximum of what was paid for what was received. Why, surely the honorable member knew that the value attached to the exports represented the value of those articles on the spot. It represented the total amount that was to be received in connection with those goods. As regarded the imports, a certain amount—10 per cent.—was put on to cover the expenses in introducing them, and this, with the original cost, represented what the colony had to pay. That the honorable and gallant gentleman should have failed to perceive this was to him something astonishing. He and the Hon. Mr. Robinson had fallen into a mistake regarding the manner in which these valuations were made. He seemed to think that they were made by the grower. As a rule they were not made by the grower, who was utterly ignorant of the amount at which they were valued.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON said he was quite aware that the exports were valued, not by the growers, but by the exporters, who were the best judges of their value.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said that one honorable gentleman had referred to the exporter and the other to the grower; but neither the exporter nor the grower had anything to do with these matters. As a rule, it was the clerk employed in the shipper's office who put the valuation on the articles; and the tendency was, seeing that no charge was connected with it, to overvalue, with a view to exaggerate the importance of the business done by the establishment with which the clerk was connected. That was not some-

thing confined to this colony. It had been referred to in connection with the valuation of imports and exports in England, where no fixed duties were attached. Where there was a duty attached it was the interest of the valuer to value at the very lowest; but it was found in England—and in considering English returns it must be borne in mind, otherwise they would arrive at a very false conclusion—it was found in England, and was a subject of comment, that the valuers valued articles upon which there was no duty paid in a very loose and perfunctory manner, which rendered the returns of comparatively little practical value. The Hon. Colonel Whitmore said it was not our interest to make the returns look bad. His honorable friend Mr. Buckley would, he thought, maintain, as he certainly maintained, that it was not our interest, nor was it right, that we should put a false gloss upon our true position. If they came to take the real value of the articles, honorable members would find, as he had stated on former occasions, that our exports for the last ten years, which were really the test of our ability to pay the huge yearly interest connected with our public and private indebtedness, had practically scarcely increased at all. It was a most extraordinary thing that that should be the case, and he should be very sorry indeed to see a too depreciatory view of our position represented by our Customs returns; but, on the other hand, he would be equally sorry to see a too favourable view. If these returns were to be of any value at all, they should be as near an approximation to the truth as circumstances would permit. With regard to imports, the tendency was to estimate goods paying duty at the very lowest possible value; but it was not so as regarded exports: and therefore it seemed to him desirable that the Customs officers should have their attention directed to this subject, and should do all in their power to rectify apparent errors. If they could not check the valuation of individual shipments of wool—and they were not experts, able to do so—still they must have a general knowledge of the value of wool, and when they saw the total quantity of wool shipped they could judge for themselves whether the return was an exaggerated one or not. That the return of the export of wool was an exaggerated one was evident from two circumstances: one circumstance was, that the average value of wool was stated at 1s. 1½d. per pound, and the other circumstance was that, in spite of this very high valuation the average clip was something over five pounds for every sheep in the colony; and the result bore out what had been said, that there was comparatively little scoured wool sent away, for, as regarded merino flocks, a clip of five pounds would, he thought, be generally admitted to be a fair average clip, even when the wool was in grease. He thought advantage would arise from the adoption of this resolution, because he felt sure, if the attention of the proper officers were called to the subject, some steps would be taken which would have the effect at any rate of remedying the very great differences which now existed between the Customs valuations and the real values of our exports.

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY, in reply, said, of course the Hon. Colonel Whitmore had made a mistake. The insurance value had nothing to do with the matter, because the value of the exports was simply the estimated value of the article on the spot. How these estimates were made up was well known: it was left to the merchant, and the merchant left it to his clerk. He could see one way in which this system of overvaluing had arisen. In former years it was the practice to estimate the value of wool at so much per bale, and, although prices had fallen, no reduction had been made in the value of the bale. He would suggest that instructions should be given to the Customs that in all cases the value should be set down as the market value on the spot: by that means the value of the exports would to a certain extent be known. It was a matter for alarm that these returns should be incorrect, because, for instance, last year the Colonial Treasurer held that the exports were so much per head, but the truth would have been better represented had 25 per cent. of that value been taken off.

Motion agreed to.

AGENT-GENERAL.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that a little while ago, at the beginning of the present session, two papers were laid on the table by the Government—one being a letter from Sir Julius Vogel relative to his position as Agent-General, and the other proposing alterations and reductions in the Agent-General's office—in continuation of papers laid before Parliament in the session of 1878. In the latter of these papers there was to be found a recommendation made by the Agent-General to the Government to change the designation of his office. He proposed, first of all, that Mr. Kennaway, who had for some time been in the department, should be made Assistant Agent-General, and that the Agent-General should be appointed a "Resident Minister;" and then he went on, "There is, I think, much to be said in favour of altering this title, and the status of the Agent-General. . . . I think, too, that many things which now pass through the Governors of colonies with some risk of disturbing the harmonious relations between the colonies and the mother-country, might be dealt with by the Resident Minister, under direct instructions from the Governor in Council." And then Sir Julius Vogel added, "An Agent-General's position should, in my opinion, be analogous to that of an ambassador, making allowance for the fact that he is representing a portion of the same Empire." Readers of this paper were led to understand from this that the Agent-General proposed to create a new office in England for which no provision had ever been made, and also to give a new title to the office which he himself at present held. As there was no record before the Council of any answer having been made to this application, the Council had no means of forming any idea on the subject; they would therefore be glad to hear what the present Government thought of the matter, and whether

they had any intention of allowing this new office to be created, and whether they concurred in the recommendations of the Agent-General about changing the title of his office. In addition to that, a circumstance had arisen, within the knowledge of a great many members, which was not referred to in either of these papers—namely, that the Agent-General had offered himself as a candidate for the representation of a constituency in the House of Commons. He thought it desirable that the opinion of the Council should be expressed upon this, and he regretted that the Council had not received some official intimation about it from the late Government, because the circumstance arose while they were in office. He did not hesitate to say, with respect to the present Agent-General, as one who had known him for many years, that if he were to succeed in obtaining a seat in the House of Commons he would take a conspicuous place there, and would very greatly advance those objects which every one who sought a seat in the English Parliament must be desirous to promote; but he said, equally without hesitation, that the Agent-General of New Zealand ought not to be in the Imperial Parliament at all. It was never intended, when the office of Agent-General was created, that that officer should be otherwise than a business man, devoting all his time and attention to whatever he was called upon to do for the colony; and if the Agent-General were to find himself engaged in the turmoil of English politics, and obliged to take that part in English life which a position in the House of Commons nowadays required him to do, it would be impossible for him to do proper justice to his duties as Agent for the colony. That was speaking from merely a business point of view; but, when the proposal was looked at from a political point of view, it was still more serious. The Agent-General, in announcing himself as a candidate, had come forward as a pronounced supporter of Lord Beaconsfield's Conservative Government. Now, every one, he thought, whatever his private political opinions might be, would say that the New Zealand Government should not allow any officer in their service to take part in English public affairs as a supporter of either of the political parties at Home. He felt surprised that no notice had been taken of the matter by the late Government, because surely it must have struck them as inconvenient that a highly Liberal Government in this colony should be represented in England by a gentleman who was a pronounced supporter of a Conservative Government; but when he looked at the character of the measures which were now being introduced, and found that the "grand liberal policy" of their predecessors was so entirely adopted by the present Government, he should hardly think it more convenient for them to find themselves represented in England by a strong Conservative than it would have been for their predecessors. He thought the Government should express some opinion on the matter; and he hoped that, when the Hon. the Attorney-General had given the matter consideration, he would be able to return an answer satisfactory to the Council.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That it is desirable this Council should be informed whether the attention of the present Government has been called to the candidature of the Agent-General for an English constituency; and, if so, what course they purpose taking in regard thereto."—(*Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell*.)

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER said he thought the matter was to come up in the form of a question; and, while he was quite prepared to answer the question involved, he was not prepared to enter into the discussion of those matters which the honorable gentleman had opened up, without due notice. With regard to the question whether the attention of the Government had been called to the candidature of the Agent-General for an English constituency, he had to reply that nothing had occurred since the present Government entered office which had brought the matter under their notice. They had given the matter no consideration, and therefore could not reply to the second part of the question, as to what course they purposed taking. But he might point out that the matter was brought under the consideration of the late Government. It would be seen by reference to the current volume of *Hansard*, page 140, that Mr. Murray had put a question in another place, and that, in reply, the late Government had expressed strong disapproval of the Agent-General standing for an English constituency, and had sent a telegram to that effect. That telegram required him to resign his office or to forego his candidature. To that telegram no answer had been received, and nothing had occurred to bring the matter under the consideration of the Government; but if the matter did come up they would at once deal with it. At any rate, from the tenor of the telegram it was required that Sir Julius Vogel must elect to do one thing or the other, either to resign his office or to give up his candidature.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said the honorable gentleman had correctly stated the view which the late Government held with regard to the proposal of Sir Julius Vogel. The late Government wholly disapproved of the course which Sir Julius Vogel had adopted in two instances, in departing from what they considered to be the proper course for the Agent-General to follow. They thought he had duties which would occupy quite enough of his time, putting every other consideration on one side, to make it absolutely improper for him to undertake any other occupation, or to enrol himself in the ranks of the British House of Commons. The Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, in dealing with the matter, had mentioned one very good reason why the Agent-General should not enter the House of Commons; but there was another. In former times, when the colonies were under the tutelage of the Home Government—when, in fact, the colonies were not out of leading-strings—there was an idea that to have friends in the House of Commons was of great importance; but, on the other hand, if there was any force in this, it was equally clear that friends in the House of Commons might be the cause of great embarrassment to the colony, because, although they might have influence

when a particular Government was in office, that advantage might be more than outweighed when a Ministry to whom those persons were hostile came into office in turn. It was practically impossible that any man could be in the House of Commons without belonging to any party at all. However, he believed the time had gone by when the Home Government could affect these colonies. The real point was, that the two positions were incompatible. Perhaps honorable members might remember the action taken by Canada in this matter. A well-known Radical, the author of the famous satire called "Ginx's Baby," Mr. Jenkins, was Agent-General for Canada, and, being elected to a seat in the House of Commons, the Government of Canada at once informed him that it had no further need for his services. He (Colonel Whitmore) did not think it would be desirable for the Agent-General to enter the House of Commons, and he thought Sir Julius Vogel should be required to make up his mind on this and other subjects. He had replied to telegrams that the Government should have his reasons and explanations by the following mail; but the only reasons and explanations which arrived were this proposition to make himself a Minister, with the rank and coat of an ambassador, and to raise his clerk to the position of Agent-General. That did not appear to be conclusively satisfactory; and the Government thereupon sent him a peremptory telegram to elect at once whether he would perform the duties of Agent-General as before, and devote his whole attention to them, or whether he would resign the office. Circumstances had now relegated him (Colonel Whitmore) to another side of the House, and he did not know whether an answer had been received; but, up to the time of his leaving office, either the telegraph wire had been working very badly, or there had been a great deal of backwardness in coming forward in the Agent-General's office, because six weeks or two months had elapsed since the sending of that telegram. The question must be faced; and he confessed he saw indications which led him to believe something was likely to occur with reference to this office. He thought it was quite possible that recent great political changes had hinged upon the disposal of this office; but, since the Hon. the Attorney-General had assured the Council that the Government had given no consideration to the matter, he was bound to accept that explanation. Nevertheless, he might be allowed to say that he thought other people had given the matter consideration. He agreed that the Agent-General ought not to be in the House of Commons; and he should oppose in every constitutional way any proposal that the Agent-General should be allowed to hold office while a member of the House of Commons.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said he was rather astonished at the honorable and gallant gentleman who had last spoken taking exception to the proposal of the Agent-General to change the constitution of his office. It was true the proposition of the Agent-General was calculated to a great extent to magnify the importance of his office, but in this it seemed to him (Mr.

Waterhouse) that the Agent-General was only the worthy representative of the views held by the late Ministry—

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—No.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—Because it was well known that the late Premier himself expressed a desire that the Agent-General should be in the position of a Secretary of State—that he should wear a grand uniform, and should have the right of access to Her Majesty in her own person. That being the view of the Premier, and a similar view being entertained by the Agent-General, it was rather astonishing that his proposition was now so strongly opposed by the Hon. Colonel Whitmore. The honorable gentleman called "No" to his (Mr. Waterhouse's) remark that these were the views entertained by the head of the Ministry of which the honorable gentleman was a member; but he had evidently forgotten the important speech delivered in Auckland, in which the Premier laid great stress upon this particular point. Not being in the secret as regarded late Ministerial changes, he did not know how far the honorable gentleman was correct in his surmises about the Agent-Generalship; but he presumed he was judging the present Ministry by the action taken by himself or by his colleagues at the time of the formation of the previous Ministry. If his memory did not mislead him, there were some rumours afloat at that time as to the office of Agent-General being dangled before the eyes of a gentleman well fitted to perform the duties of the position, he admitted, but who, public report stated, had been to some extent influenced in his vote by the offer. Probably in the present case the honorable gentleman had judged the existing Ministry by the action taken by himself and his colleagues on a former occasion. Speaking to the question, he knew Sir Julius Vogel pretty well; and he thought, if that gentleman had set his heart upon entering the British Parliament, he would not allow the retention of the office of Agent-General to stand in the way of carrying out that idea, and he thought it probable that the action Sir Julius Vogel had undoubtedly taken in England would lead to his severing himself from the office he now held. If that were the case, he hoped the Ministry would take into their serious consideration the desirability of recasting this particular office altogether. The office of Agent-General was the most honorable office that any person connected with the politics of New Zealand could hold. It was the highest political prize that could be reached by any person connected with the politics of the colony; and he thought that, in any further action which might be taken with regard to this office, that fact should be considered. In one of the other colonies an Act had been passed limiting the term of office of an Agent-General to three years, so that no person might appear to possess a monopoly of the high honors attached to that position; and he (Mr. Waterhouse) thought it would be wise if, in reconsidering this question—should it press itself upon the Government for consideration—the Government should consider whether it was not desirable to place the New Zealand Agent-General

Hon. Colonel Whitmore

ralship on a somewhat similar footing. Not only did it appear to be not desirable that no person should be regarded as having a monopoly for life of the position, but in the interest of the colony it seemed expedient that there should be a periodical infusion of new blood into that particular department, one result of which would be that the office would be continually filled by persons who had just had an active acquaintance with the politics of the colony. That would be a great advantage; and he trusted that any future action with regard to the office would be in this direction, so that the office might be a political prize held up as obtainable by any leading man for a period of three years—by any man who had passed through the highest and most important offices in the colony, and had thus shown that he possessed to the fullest extent the confidence of his fellow-colonists.

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY hoped that if any change were made in regard to this office it would be made in remembrance that the strictest economy was necessary in these times, and that there was necessity for considering the propriety of altering the administration of the office altogether. He knew it had been asked previously, "Why should there be an Agent-General at all?" and that the reply had been, "In order to look after the business connected with sending railway plant, and other matters;" but he had no hesitation in saying it would have been very much better if the Agent-General had not been allowed to interfere with the importation into the colony of railway plant. From what he had seen, and from what he had been told, he had come to the conclusion that, by allowing the Agent-General to interfere in these matters, tens of thousands of pounds had been lost to the colony. It was not only what had been lost by purchases, but there was hardly a railway-yard in the colony in which there were not large heaps of material lying idle, which on inquiry turned out to be condemned material—material which had been sent out and condemned here as worthless. That had been the result of the system. If a return were made up showing the amount of material which had been condemned after reaching the colony, the loss would be found to amount to a very large sum of money. The same system had been tried in the other colonies, and had been found to work so badly that a change had been made. He had observed that a contract had recently been let for the supply of five hundred thousand pounds' worth of material in another colony; and it had been found to be the best course, because the material was imported at the risk of the contractor, and the Government had an opportunity of examining and rejecting that not up to the conditions of the contract.

The Hon. Captain FRASER said he had always been under the impression that some person or other received a commission on the railway plant, and when he was at Home he asked the late Dr. Featherston whether he was aware if that was the case, and Dr. Featherston said he did not know who got the commission, but he did not. And it would be admitted by all who knew that gentleman that he knew nothing at all about it.

The fact was, there was a man holding an appointment at Home which was worth thousands and thousands. He alluded to the Inspecting Engineer, who, in his opinion, was the person into whose pocket the commission went. Instead of having an Agent-General's office and department at Home, it would be better to send a practical man of business there; and he would be very glad indeed to see the Agent-General's office done away with altogether.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE wished to join issue on some opinions which had been expressed by the honorable gentleman with reference to the appointment of an Agent-General in London. He was of opinion that the practical portion of the work of the Agent-General had been but poorly done, and he thought the colony might have had much better value for its money by the adoption of a modification of the course suggested by the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley. But he thought the position of Agent-General ought to be preserved, and that it ought chiefly to be an honorary one; and he was sure that, chiefly as an honorary position, it could be advantageously filled. He was of opinion that the Agent-General ought to be allowed to contest a seat in the Imperial Parliament, and that if he succeeded in obtaining a seat in that Legislature his services would be of enhanced value to the colony. He differed altogether from the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell, when he stated that it was curious to observe that our Agent-General was announcing himself as a prominent supporter of a Conservative Ministry in England, and there were very strong reasons why such a course should not be pursued. He (Dr. Grace) had not heard a single reason in support of this view advanced, except one which was submitted by the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, to this effect: that the interests of the colony might be sacrificed on account of the political proclivities of its representative. If that was the main reason why the Agent-General should not occupy a seat in the British Parliament, he could only say such a reason had no influence with him whatever.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said the honorable gentleman was misquoting him. What he said was, that he did not believe that, the colony not being any longer in leading-strings, it would matter much whether the Home Government wished it well or not; but that, if it was otherwise, and the Agent-General had a seat in Parliament, and the Government of which he was a supporter went out, the interests of the colony might be sacrificed by his proclivities.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE thanked the honorable gentleman for the correction. He was partly led into the error by something the honorable member said previously, and which was to this effect: that, if the Imperial Government still had any influence upon the affairs of the colony, the interests of the colony might be sacrificed on account of the political proclivities of its representative in England. But it was clear that he did not catch the honorable gentleman's true meaning, which was this: that, supposing that the presence of the Agent-General in Parliament, as a political supporter of any party, was of use

to the colony on account of his belonging to that party, therefore the colony might suffer when that party went out of office. He maintained that the advantages which an Agent-General would have in possessing a seat in Parliament, altogether apart from his party influence, would be of such importance to the colony that it would be of great service to us were such a thing possible. Our relations with the Imperial Government were very well defined and clearly understood. There was probably nothing in the British Constitution so well laid down now as the respective relations of the colonies to the Empire and of the Empire to the colonies; and it would be absurd to suppose that the mere presence of a single member in the House of Commons could in any way upset the well-established relations which had tended so much to make the greatness of the Empire. What he wished to draw attention to was the opinion he entertained that the social position of an Agent-General in England might conduce materially to the welfare of the colony. The mere opportunities a member of Parliament in England had of coming in contact with the best classes of men—the mere opportunities he had of familiarizing others with the requirements of the colony and its capacity for development—the mere opportunities he had of saying a word in favour of the colony—might be of very great use to the colony, and, for his part, the one thing he approved of in regard to Sir Julius Vogel retaining the Agency was, that he had the courage to attempt to obtain a seat in the House of Commons. He thought that the office of the Agent-General had been extravagantly conducted, and that, like other people under similar circumstances, they had not had the best value for their money; but he thought that, owing to the position which Sir Julius Vogel occupied in the opinion of the English public, the colony had reaped a very great deal of benefit. His prominence in London had been of material value to the colony, and, if that prominence were more pronounced, New Zealand would benefit by it. Therefore he was an advocate for altering materially the exact position which the Agent-General occupied in relation to his duties, and for allowing him to occupy a seat in Parliament. There were many ways in which the Agent-General might be of use to the colony, and in which that officer had been of use in the past. The Agent-General might be very useful indeed in keeping the colony in the public favour in London, and in keeping us *en rapport* with the feeling of England as regarded our prospects. For example, there was no doubt that, if the Agent-General had performed his duty, he would have warned the colony about nine months ago that our financial position in England was considered unsatisfactory. That information ought to have been sent to the Ministers who had just retired from office. The Agent-General must have known that the financial position of the colony was constantly in the mouths of moneyed men in London, and he ought to have warned Ministers that we were in a position in which the strictest economy was imperatively required at their hands. He had merely risen to take exception to certain objections

Hon. Dr. Grace

that had been raised to the actual intention of Sir Julius Vogel to contest a seat in Parliament. He saw no reason in the world why our Agent-General should not occupy a seat in the Imperial Parliament; and he went further, and said that, if the Agent-Generalship was the first prize to be obtained in the political life of these colonies, it was their duty to make that prize well worth having, and, if they restricted the career of the Agent-General by the condition that under no circumstances must he contest a seat in the British Parliament, they derogated from the value and importance of that appointment. But there could be nothing in our relations with the Imperial Government, and nothing in the relations of the Imperial Government with the colonies, to render it undesirable in any sense that a member of Parliament should act as our Agent-General.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER ventured to ask the honorable the mover to consider the propriety of withdrawing his motion at the present time. The honorable gentleman representing the Government had told them—what, of course, they all knew before—that this question had not come before the present Government at all, and that they had not, in fact, received any reply to the telegram sent by the late Government. That he understood to be the present position of the case, and therefore he imagined that, as an expression of opinion had been given by the Council on this matter, it would be unnecessary to press it further. He believed that at the time this question was raised a dissolution in England was imminent. No dissolution, however, had taken place, and Parliament would not be dissolved until after next session, which would commence in February next. Therefore no decision would be required, at any rate for some time, on the question of the present Agent-General becoming a member of Parliament. Under these circumstances it seemed to him that it would be premature to discuss the matter. He was very glad indeed to have heard the opinions of different members. He confessed that he did not feel himself competent to express an opinion as to whether the colony would be better with or without an Agent-General. He could not help feeling, however, that it would be a very extreme measure to abolish the office. It seemed to him that an Agent-General was absolutely necessary; and if the mover of this resolution would bear witness as to what he himself (the Hon. Sir F. Dillon Bell) and the late Dr. Featherston did for the colony when they went Home as Commissioners—if he would describe a certain interview with Mr. Gladstone, at which the true position of New Zealand was most ably represented to that gentleman, and when Mr. Gladstone himself acknowledged that he had never known the whole truth of the matter until then, and candidly confessed that all the Commissioners said was true—a history of that kind would, he believed, be in itself no very slight testimony to the importance and necessity of the colony being represented by an Agent-General at Home. There were, no doubt, a great many other instances which honorable members could adduce in which the services of an Agent-General were absolutely

necessary. With regard to the question of that officer being a member of the British Parliament, that, of course, was another thing altogether. He was very much inclined to think that the view taken by the Canadian Government had a great deal of force, and that it would probably be better that our Agent-General should be neutral, and not under the influences of any party. As to what had been said about the waste which took place in connection with the department, he thought, considering the rush of orders which had gone Home from the colony, and the scramble there had been in getting out thousands of tons of material in each year, that they might think themselves fortunate that there had been no greater waste; and he did not think there was any proof at all that there would have been less waste had there been no Agent-General. He hoped the honorable gentleman would withdraw the motion.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES thought it would be convenient that the latter part of the motion should be postponed for the present, seeing that the Attorney-General was not in a position to express the view of the Government on the subject. The matter not having been considered by the Government, the honorable gentleman could not possibly say what their opinion was. But he did not think there was any necessity to postpone the other part of the motion. The debate which had occurred showed that the Council took a strong interest in this subject, and that it desired more information. One or two points had been referred to in the course of the debate which he would first take up, before touching upon the direct question. First, with regard to the unnecessary expense which had been incurred, and the waste that had taken place in material, the Agent-General could not be blamed for that, as the Hon. Captain Fraser had pointed out; neither could any of the people connected with the office, seeing that the Government not only had an engineer, appointed by itself, to inspect all material, but that it also entered into an agreement—he thought, at the time when the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse was a member of the Government—to pay a certain percentage—10 per cent., he thought.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said he had nothing to do with that.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES was very glad to hear it; but an agreement was made to pay a certain percentage to engineers appointed by the great contractors, the Messrs. Brogden, to go through a similar ceremony of inspection. Now, if any material which had passed under the inspection of engineers appointed by both those parties proved to be useless, the experts who were appointed should bear the blame rather than the department. Then there was another point: He confessed he was unable to see that it was necessary to continue to maintain so expensive an establishment as that of the Agent-General. It cost a great deal of money, and he did not know that it did very much good at present, beyond regulating the immigration from Home, and keeping the Government *au courant* with what was going on in financial circles. The

reference of the Hon. Mr. Miller to what had been done by some envoys from New Zealand—and allusion might also be made to the labours of the Hon. the Speaker in a similar capacity—showed that, when circumstances rendered it desirable, New Zealand would always be able to send Home competent men to manage its affairs, and that when it was necessary to carry out financial arrangements at Home the colony could send delegates for the purpose. He maintained that the office of Agent-General was not required for this particular purpose; and he was not at all certain that the success which had attended the labours of the Agent-General in that direction had been such as to lead them to select that particular agency to carry out financial operations at Home rather than the means previously adopted, when the work was done by special envoys. While he concurred in the view expressed by the honorable the mover of this resolution, that it was not expedient for the Agent-General of the colony to become a partisan in English political life—a position which he must necessarily assume if he entered the House of Commons—he thought there was one feature of the matter which had escaped the attention of the honorable members who had spoken. The Council knew very well that the Agent-General had established a large emigration dépôt at Plymouth at a very large expense, and that a staff was kept there to look after the arrangements. They had been informed by the English papers that Sir Julius Vogel, on going to Falmouth to sound the views of the constituents there, gave an indication of his opinion that Falmouth was a more convenient place. He (Mr. Menzies) thought it might be fairly inferred from this that if the Government approved, and the Agent-General was returned by the constituency, he would, as a corollary, endeavour to press on the Government the advisability of changing the emigration dépôt to what he might represent as a more favourable situation, which would also have the advantage of being the locality for which he sat as representative. Now, he did not think he need dwell on this point. It must be obvious enough to all members of the Council that in this way a very large expenditure might be incurred, which might not increase the efficiency of the service, but would have the effect of promoting the private views of the Agent-General for the time being. He must express his entire approval of the terms of the telegram which was sent to Sir Julius Vogel by the late Government. He believed the right policy of the Government would be to adhere to the same view; and he trusted they would also see their way to materially lessen the expenditure in the department of the Agent-General at Home, seeing that the amount of work to be done now was so very much less than had to be performed in the earlier days after the office was first established, and that any special financial operations could always be undertaken by envoys sent from New Zealand for the purpose.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES thought the honorable gentleman who had preceded him had hardly done justice to the Agents-General they had had heretofore. His own impression was, that New

Zealand had been specially fortunate in its representatives in that capacity. The late Dr. Featherston undoubtedly stood at the very head of Agents-General. He had the entire confidence of the Colonial Office, and there was no official who came in contact with him who had not the highest respect for him and for the colony he represented. They did not seem inclined either to give sufficient credit to Sir Julius Vogel for what he had been doing for the colony. He was scarcely aware of any colony about which there had been so much misrepresentation as New Zealand, and it was a most fortunate circumstance that the colony had a gentleman representing it in England who was both able and willing to refute these misrepresentations in a most effectual manner. There was undoubtedly a great waste in the first blush of our public works policy, which was not, however, in consequence of the action of the Agent-General, but owing to want of judgment in ordering peremptorily large quantities of plant, when it was well known at the time the orders were sent that material was at double or treble the ordinary current price. When the Agent-General received an order for a large quantity of plant, he had no alternative but to fill the order at whatever rate the material could be supplied at. With regard to the office, he (Mr. Holmes) was perhaps as well informed on this subject as most honorable members, and he could say that, for the duties required to be performed, the present number of officials employed was absolutely necessary. The gentleman next in position to Sir Julius Vogel, Mr. Kennaway, who was from Canterbury, was thoroughly acquainted with all the wants of the colony, and was quite capable of representing those wants in an effectual manner. Under him was a gentleman who had grown grey as a merchant before being employed to do the shipping business for the colony—Mr. McKellar. The number of officials in the emigration department had swelled up the expenses of the office, and this was not caused so much at the desire of the Agent-General as at the desire of Ministers in the Colony; because, instead of the Agents-General having been permitted to engage persons who they thought would be competent to conduct the business of immigration, a number of persons had obtained walking commissions from the colony, outside the Agent-General's office altogether, and at large salaries, to go about and publish the wants of the colony. With regard to the Agent-General entering Parliament, he could see no objection to that whatever. What would be the position of the Agent-General when he entered Parliament? Merely that of a private member. The representative of the colony in the House of Commons was the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and no one else; and Sir Julius Vogel, if he were to enter Parliament to-morrow, would merely be recognized as the member for Falmouth, and not as the representative of New Zealand. Whatever Canada might have done, he could see no good reason why New Zealand should object to its Agent-General having a seat in the House of Commons. He imagined that in some respects it would alter his position for

Hon. Mr. Holmes

the better—it would give him more influence when transacting public business on behalf of the colony.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL, in reply, said he was not at all sorry that he had raised the question, since it had resulted in this debate. Notwithstanding the different opinions expressed, he thought the Council would at any rate agree to one thing—namely, that, supposing the balance of opinion to be in favour of the Agent-General going into the House of Commons, at least permission to do so should first be granted to him by the Executive Government of the colony, and it should not be considered to be a matter about which he had only to exercise his choice. He was aware of the reply that had been given in the other House, but his honorable and learned friend had omitted to say that the answer given on that occasion did not amount to an authoritative statement of the intentions of the Government; and he (Sir F. Dillon Bell) was anxious, therefore, that the honorable gentleman should call the attention of his colleagues to the matter, and inform the Council what would be their decision with regard to it. He felt that it would not be right, while the subject was still under consideration, to press it forward at present; but he might say that, if the Government did not come to a decision, he should again seek the opinion of the Council before the session closed. If it was decided that the Agent-General might enter upon the party struggles which were becoming more and more fierce in the House of Commons—if he might, in fact, employ his time chiefly, as he must do if he entered that House, in attending to English politics—let it be so; but do not let his candidature go on for months and months without any notice being taken of it here. Reference had been made to the question of Plymouth and Falmouth. He had refrained from that question, but he was not sorry the Hon. Mr. Menzies had raised it. There the Council had an exact instance of the inconvenience of the position; and, since the question had been raised, he would press it. An establishment in connection with our immigration had been long on foot at Plymouth; yet, just when the Agent-General was going to stand for Falmouth, it appeared Falmouth was a more desirable place than Plymouth for the emigration establishment. It might be so, but it was not pleasant to find the two circumstances coincident, because it seemed as if there was some relation between the candidature of the Agent-General for Falmouth, and the proposal to spend a lot of money there and to make it a dépôt for emigration; and it would have been more desirable had the Agent-General been a candidate for some other place. One other point to which he must refer was the question of the representation of the colony in England. He had no desire whatever to cast any blame on the present Agent-General for the manner in which he discharged his duties. No one admired that gentleman's abilities, or valued the work he had done for the colony, more than he (Sir F. Dillon Bell) did; he quite admitted that Sir Julius Vogel had been conspicuous for his desire to advance the true interests and welfare

of the colony, and that the colony had no reason to find fault with him at all. While on this point he might add that he wished public men would not be so ready to cast imputations upon those who did the country good service. He had heard with regret, not a long time ago, in a place he was not allowed to mention, a distinguished statesman of the colony attack Mr. Herbert, the Under Secretary for the Colonies. It was then said that Mr. Herbert was appointed by his cousin, Lord Carnarvon, for reasons which seemed, as described, not at all creditable; but the statement was absolutely incorrect. Mr. Herbert was appointed by Lord Granville, and not by Lord Carnarvon; and he had rendered most signal services to this and other colonies. He had no doubt that the Hon. the Speaker would remember Mr. Herbert; and he (Sir F. Dillon Bell), as one of the Commissioners who went Home in 1870, was glad to recognize the great assistance Mr. Herbert then gave to New Zealand at a very critical time. He must deprecate such reflections upon gentlemen who had acted as Mr. Herbert had done. He would ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

PRISONS BILL.

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 29th October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Readings—Prisons Bill—Proclamation of Counties—Agent-General—Public Works Expenditure—Christchurch Hospital and Charitable Aid Board—Helenesville-Kaukapapa Railway—Payment of Members—Police Long-Service Pay—University Education, North Island—Native Expenditure—Book on Fiji—Higher Courts Procedure—Cost of Last Election—Employment of Labour—Education Reserves—Hokitika Harbour Works—Grey Ministry—Mines Act—Government Banking Account—Auckland Members—D. Hutchison—D. Clinie and J. Gwynneth—East and West Coast Railway—Northern Maori District—Taxation—Kawau—Waitara Harbour Board Land and Borrowing Bill—Sites for Working-Men's Clubs Bill—Dramatic Works Copyright Bill—Christchurch Drill-shed Bill—Timaru Waterworks Bill—Native Lawsuits Bill—Licensing Bill (No. 2).

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Southland and Wallace Counties District Railways Bill, Municipal Corporations Bill, Maori Members' Election Validation Bill, Protection of Animals Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Masterton and Greytown Lands Management Bill, Otago University Reserves Vesting Bill, West Clive Public Hall Reserve Bill.

PRISONS BILL.

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

PROCLAMATION OF COUNTIES.

Mr. WAKEFIELD wished to draw the attention of the House to a matter of order. It referred to a paper presented to the House and laid on the table by the Government on the 3rd October. It was a copy of a Proclamation constituting the County of Timaru, under section 15 of "The Counties Act, 1876." The point of order he desired to draw attention to was, that this Proclamation ought not to have been laid on the table of the House this session, but next session. Clause 15 of the Counties Act said, "A copy of every such Proclamation shall be laid before Parliament within ten days after its next sitting after the issue thereof." This Proclamation was issued on the 2nd October, when Parliament was in session, and it was laid on the table of the House the following day—the 3rd October. It was clear that under the law it ought not to have been laid on the table of the House till within ten days after the opening of next session of Parliament. Now, the consequences which attended the laying of this paper on the table were very material; and, as it largely affected his constituents, he thought it his duty to draw the attention of the House to the question of order, with a view to having the copy of the Proclamation discharged or withdrawn from the records of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER would look into the matter, and would express an opinion on the subject on the following day.

AGENT-GENERAL.

Mr. SHRIMSKI asked the Government, Whether they intend to retain the services of Sir Julius Vogel as Agent-General for the colony; if not, whether they intend to appoint some one else, and, if so, whom? He had put this question in consequence of rumours, circulated inside and outside of this House, that the services of Sir Julius Vogel were to be dispensed with, and another person appointed in his stead. It was to satisfy the public that he put the question.

Mr. HALL replied that the Government had no intention of making any change at present.

PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURE.

Mr. SHEPARD asked the Premier, Whether, when the account stated by the honorable member for Waitemata to be promised to the Auckland members is made up, showing the expenditure upon public works in different parts of the colony in every provincial district of New Zealand, if the account shows that Nelson has not received as fair a share as other districts have received, the Government will adopt some way by which the balance shall be made good? His reason for putting the question was to give the Premier an opportunity of stating to the House and the country that there had been no intention to favour any particular part of the colony in regard to public works expenditure. If the answer should be in the affirmative, as he expected it would be, it would satisfy himself and the country generally that there had been no corrupt intention in anything that had occurred of which they had heard so much during the last few days. If, on the

other hand, it should turn out that the Government did not intend to apply an equal measure of justice to other parts of the colony, they would be liable to blame. He did not suppose that such was the case. He believed the Premier would thank him for putting the question on the Paper, so as to make it clear to all parts of the colony that where they had been wronged they would have justice done them.

Mr. HALL could assure the honorable gentleman that there was no intention to favour any part of the colony. The intention of the Government was to do justice as far as practicable to all parts of the colony.

CHRISTCHURCH HOSPITAL AND CHARITABLE AID BOARD.

Mr. STEVENS asked the Colonial Secretary, What action, if any, the Government intend to take with reference to the correspondence recently forwarded to the Government by the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board in Christchurch, on the subject of a memorial to the Colonial Secretary by a number of medical gentlemen in Christchurch, on the 22nd September last?

Mr. HALL replied that the Government had received a short letter from the late medical staff of the Christchurch Hospital, asking the Government to suspend any further proceedings until they had an opportunity of replying to the last letter from the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board.

HELENSVILLE-KAUKAPAKAPA RAILWAY.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Minister for Public Works, When the Government intend calling for contracts for the construction of the railway from Helensville to Kaukapakapa, money having been voted by the Assembly for that purpose? His reason for putting this question was that in the session of 1878 the House authorized the construction of the railway from Helensville to Kaukapakapa, and in the same session voted a sum of money for the purpose of going on with the work. Up to the present time no survey of the line had been made, and no contract entered into for the construction of the railway.

Mr. OLIVER said the length of the line was two and a half miles. The sum voted towards its construction was £2,000, and the estimated cost was £15,000. So far no contract had been entered into, but a week ago he authorized the engagement of a surveyor to go on with the survey of the line.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier, Whether the Government intend this year to bring in a Bill to provide for the payment of members by Statute?

Mr. HALL said it was not the intention of the Government to do so.

Mr. GEORGE wished to ask Mr. Speaker's ruling whether or not a private member could bring in a Bill for the purpose mentioned.

Mr. SPEAKER said private members could not introduce Bills dealing with money matters.

Mr. Shephard

POLICE LONG-SERVICE PAY.

Mr. REID asked the Premier, If the Government intend taking steps to place the members of the police force in the various provincial districts on an equal footing in respect to long-service pay?

Mr. HALL said the facts of the case were these: that long-service pay was only given to the Otago police, and, after the abolition of provinces, that payment was continued by the General Government. It was the intention of the Government to continue the long-service pay to those officers who had been receiving it; but it was not the intention to extend it.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, NORTH ISLAND.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister of Education, Whether the Government intend to introduce this session any measure to supply the want of University education in the North Island of New Zealand, so that that portion of the colony may possess the same advantages in the matter of education as are enjoyed in Canterbury and Otago? He would like to read a portion of the report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education which had been appointed last session. That report stated,—

"We strongly recommend that this inequality in the educational institutions of the two Islands should be removed at once by establishing, at the most important centres of population in the North Island, colleges capable of supplying an education of the same standard as that provided by the University of Otago and the Canterbury College. This course will render it necessary, and will at the same time make it possible, to remodel the New Zealand University, by abolishing the system of affiliation, and bringing the Otago University and the Canterbury College, together with the new colleges proposed to be established, into a much closer relation with the University than the present system admits of. Entering more fully into details, we propose that the Government should invite the Legislature to make immediate provision for the establishment of two colleges—one at Auckland and the other at Wellington—of such a character as has been already indicated."

Further on the report stated,—

"We are of opinion that it will be necessary for the Government either to select out of lands at its disposal suitable sites for college buildings at Auckland and Wellington, or to acquire such sites; and that two grants of £12,500 each should be made for the building of the two colleges, and for fittings and apparatus. Although these sums are not equal to those expended for like purposes in Dunedin and Christchurch, we think they will be found sufficient for present requirements."

From the minutes of the proceedings of the Commission he also found that they, in order to give effect to the recommendation, had gone so far as to draft a Bill. He wished to know whether the Government intended to introduce the Bill drafted by the Commission, or whether they intended to bring in a measure giving effect

to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the honorable gentleman had correctly stated that there was a Bill drafted by the Commission. It had been very carefully prepared, and involved a very large question. At the present stage of the session, considering the importance of the business that had to be undertaken during the remainder of the session, and considering that the Commission had only as yet performed a part of their task, inasmuch as they had still to report on secondary education, he had to say in reply to the honorable gentleman that the Government probably would not be able to bring forward this Bill during the present session.

NATIVE EXPENDITURE.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Native Minister, If he will lay before this House—(1) a return of expenditure by the Native Department from 13th October, 1877, to 8th October, 1879, under the following heads: Native officers, food, clothing, gratuities, and contingencies; (2) a similar return of expenditure for the same purpose from 1st September, 1876, to 13th October, 1877; (3) a return of expenditure under the Civil list for Native purposes from 13th October, 1877, to 8th October, 1879; (4) a return of expenditure under the Civil list for Native purposes from 1st September, 1876, to 13th October, 1877; (5) a schedule of all claims rendered on account of Native expenditure to date which remain unpaid? He was aware that the matter involved in this question would in the ordinary course form the subject of a notice of motion. In the early part of the session he gave notice of motion for an inquiry into the Native expenditure. That notice had gone down the Order Paper, and, with the present press of business, it was doubtful whether, if he waited to bring his motion on, he would be able to procure the desired information this session. The same subject had been taken up in the other branch of the Legislature, and all the information could therefore be laid before the House without entailing any additional trouble. His object in getting this return was to have an opportunity of testing the statements which had been made to the House, as to the fact of there having been no difference in the mode of administering the Native Department as between the late Government and their predecessors.

Mr. HAMLIN said that, before the honorable gentleman replied, he should like to know whether this question was in order. If it were in order he should like to strike out "1877" with a view of inserting "1869." It appeared to him that the question was not in order, as it was raising a debatable matter.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honorable member for Franklin could not discuss the question. At the same time, it was not right for an honorable member to anticipate by a question a notice of motion appearing on the Order Paper. It would be for the Government to answer the question if they thought fit.

Mr. BRYCE said that no doubt there was a considerable amount of inconvenience in the

habit which the House was falling into of putting questions as to matters which usually formed the subjects of notices of motion. In this instance he might say that there was only one portion of this return which would entail any labour on the department of which he had the special charge. The remainder of the return would have to be compiled in the office of the Colonial Treasurer. He should have thought under ordinary circumstances that it would have entailed a good deal of labour, but, owing to the inquiry which was going on in another place, it would not be so formidable, and would be furnished as soon as possible.

BOOK ON FIJI.

Mr. SUTTON asked the Premier, Whether the Government are publishing a book upon Fijian matters; who is the writer or compiler of the book; and whether this House will be supplied with copies when published?

Mr. HALL said the Government had made inquiries on this subject, but could not find that there was any book on Fijian matters in course of publication by the Government. "Historical Sketches of Savage Life in Polynesia," a book of about 150 pages, by the Rev. W. W. Gill, B.A., was the only work of a similar character which the Government could find was being printed in the Government Printing Office. He did not know whether this was the book to which the honorable gentleman referred.

HIGHER COURTS PROCEDURE.

Mr. HISLOP asked the Government, Whether they will take into consideration the recommendations of the Law Society of Dunedin, adopted on the 17th day of October current, with a view of introducing a simpler and less expensive procedure into the higher Courts of the colony? The other day a question was asked by his honorable colleague (Mr. Shrimski) as to whether sittings of the Supreme Court were to be held at Oamaru. The answer was, that the district was sufficiently supplied in having a District Court and a Resident Magistrate's Court. That was a matter which he could not enter into, because it was a subject about which there was a variety of opinions, and his reference to it would possibly lead to a discussion. From his point of view, he was led to ask this question because, if the Government saw their way to introducing a better system into the Supreme Court, to making it more popular, and to having sittings held at short intervals at Oamaru, Timaru, &c., he believed it would be a step in the right direction. The Law Society of Dunedin adopted a report on the 17th of October, advocating a radical change in the procedure of the higher Courts. Whilst he agreed with that report, to his mind it did not go far enough; but, even if the report of the Law Society were given effect to, instead of the Supreme Court being a rich man's Court, it would answer the purposes for which it existed. He hoped the Government would be able to take this subject into consideration, and make the Supreme Court more popular than it had hitherto been. It was very well known that to a man of ordinary means

it was almost a matter of ruin to go into that Court. He wished to see the system altered.

Mr. HALL replied that the Government would take these recommendations into consideration.

COST OF LAST ELECTION.

Mr. BAIN asked the Government, If they will lay before this House a return showing the cost to the public exchequer of the last general election? Before the question was answered, he should like to add the words, "and the cost of last session of Parliament."

Mr. HALL said that the Government would have the return prepared as soon as possible.

EMPLOYMENT OF LABOUR.

Mr. BARRON asked the Government, Whether they will give instructions for each police-station in the colony to keep lists of the names and addresses of those who desire to employ labour, the nature of the work, and the remuneration offered; together with lists of those who want employment, and the remuneration required; and, to facilitate the interchange of information, for telegrams between police-stations in connection with such lists to be free? The object of this question was to indicate a simple way to help a number of unemployed people. Nearly every settler in the colony, large or small, had work there might be no pressing necessity for doing, but which he admitted it would be desirable to do. There were roads that could be cleaned and metalled; ground that might be trenched for garden, orchard, or tree planting: there were fencing, draining, gorse-grubbing, law-forming, and many improvements of that kind. A desire to relieve the distress arising from over-abundance of labour, and probably also consideration of the favourable terms that might be made under the circumstances, would induce many people to get such work done if facilities were offered for bringing it immediately under the notice of the unemployed. There were hundreds of men who would be exceedingly glad of an opportunity to tender for these small jobs. The police officers and police-stations throughout the colony had exceptional opportunities and facilities for gathering and distributing information, which might lead to such work being undertaken.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that, before seeing the honorable member's question, the Government had taken steps, at the several immigration offices, to have facilities afforded for an interchange of labour, and for promoting the objects indicated in the question. The particular idea which the honorable member suggested had not yet been acted on. He thought the suggestion deserved consideration, and he would do his best to give effect in some way to the proposal suggested by the honorable gentleman.

EDUCATION RESERVES.

Mr. IRELAND asked the Minister of Lands, If, in the interest of settlement, it is intended to introduce a Bill empowering the Educational Reserves Commissioners to deal with the lands under their control, either by sale on deferred

Mr. Hislop

payment or otherwise, through the Waste Lands Boards of the colony; the proceeds of such sales to be invested by the Commissioners in such manner as to them may seem most advantageous? The law as it now stood did not enable the Commissioners to dispose of that land by sale. All it conferred on them was the power to lease it for twenty-one years. From what he knew of the district he came from, and of the feelings of the people, he felt satisfied that they did not desire to take leases, but to purchase the land as freehold property. It was nearly all now under pastoral leases. He trusted that the Government would take the matter into consideration, in the interests of settlement.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the question raised by the honorable gentleman was one of very considerable importance. The Government had not yet had time to consider it. The Government admitted that it was a question which required attention, but he did not think it would be possible for them to deal with it this session.

HOKITIKA HARBOUR WORKS.

Mr. REID asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is the intention of the Government to grant an advance of money to the Hokitika Harbour Board to enable the Board to proceed with the present contract for harbour works; and what provision is intended to be made to enable the said Harbour Board to complete the said contract? In putting this question, he might state that he did so at the earnest desire of the Hokitika Harbour Board. He had received messages and letters from the Chairman of the Harbour Board, the Hon. Mr. Bonar, stating the circumstances, and pointing out that the sum of £5,000 was absolutely necessary in order to enable the Board to carry on the present contract. That contract, as the present Government were aware, was entered into with the full knowledge and approval of the late Government, and the contractor, Mr. Smith, was at present carrying out the work to the satisfaction of the Board. Unless the progress payments were made, a heavy penalty would be incurred by the Board. He should also like the Government to state what provision is likely to be made to complete the contract.

Mr. OLIVER replied that the Government was not yet fully informed as to the facts of this matter. They were in communication with the Hon. Mr. Bonar, the Chairman of the Harbour Board, and, on the receipt of the information they had applied for, they would make known to the honorable member for Hokitika what steps they intended to take.

GREY MINISTRY.

Mr. HALL—I promised the honorable member for the Thames (Sir G. Grey) a final answer to his request for the production of the correspondence upon the subject of the resignation of the late Ministry. With every desire to meet the views of the honorable gentleman, the Government is not able to make to His Excellency the recommendation which the honorable member suggests. The correspondence consists, first, of a

memorandum from the late Premier tendering his resignation, next of a note from His Excellency, and then of a second memorandum from the late Premier on which His Excellency at the time made an indorsement recording his impression of the conversation in the memoranda referred to. The papers are now in the position in which they were on the 7th of October. We shall not ourselves volunteer to recommend that papers recording a difference of impression as to facts should be laid on the table; but, if the honorable gentleman desires it, we are prepared to recommend that they shall be laid on the table, but, if so, they must be produced as they existed on the 7th October.

MINES ACT.

MR. GIBBS, in moving the motion standing in his name, said it might appear, on looking at the Act to which it referred, that the motion was unnecessary; but it would be observed that in the first part he asked that the Minister of Lands should be requested to have inserted in any Bill that might be introduced for amending "The Mines Act, 1877," clauses to the effect that all leases hereafter granted for working minerals (other than gold) should contain provisions for insuring the efficient working of such minerals. In the Appendix E to the Land Act of 1877 there was provision for granting mineral leases, and there was also a condition that the Waste Lands Boards should, if they thought fit, make provision for the efficient working of these minerals. Some years ago, he had a discussion with his former colleague, the late Superintendent of Nelson, as to whether the word "may" or the word "shall" should be inserted in the leases granted under that Bill. However, permission was granted to the Board to put these words in; but in the last Bill it was stated they "shall" insert them if they think fit. But they did not seem to think fit; for in the leases lately granted in his district no provisions were inserted for insuring the working of these minerals; and his constituents had requested him to bring under the notice of the House the case of a block of land upon the Collingwood Gold Field, which had been leased under the mineral leasing provisions, and was now virtually locked up from the gold-miners, who thought it a great hardship that they should be precluded from working it. The last part of the motion went on to say that the Crown should reserve "the right within proclaimed gold fields to grant to persons, other than the lessees, the right to mine for gold." There was at present a reservation to the Crown, the words in the Act being, "the right to mine shall be reserved;" but there was, again, a difficulty in regard to this matter, and that was why he wished to have provisions inserted in any proposed Bill to carry out the intention of the Act. Although the right to mine for gold was reserved in these leases, the reservation did not seem to have had any effect. Miners holding miners' rights could work the gold within the area of these blocks, but there was no provision under which a lease could be granted for gold-mining purposes, and that was the most essential part of the matter. No

large area could be taken up for quartz workings, and men could not conveniently work them under their miners' rights title. There was a provision in the Mines Act by which a lease could be granted for mining for gold, called in that Act a mining lease, in contradistinction to the mineral lease; but that could only be granted to the holder of the mineral lease. If the holder did not take it up for a gold mine the land could not be leased to any other person. He begged to move the motion standing in his name.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the Minister of Lands be requested to have inserted in any Bill that may be introduced for amending 'The Mines Act, 1877,' clauses to the effect that all leases hereafter granted for working minerals (other than gold) shall contain provisions for insuring the efficient working of such minerals, and also reserving to the Crown the right within proclaimed gold fields to grant to persons, other than the lessees, the right to mine for gold."—(Mr. Gibbs.)

MR. OLIVER said the Government recognized the value of the motion, and would offer no opposition to it.

MR. DE LAUTOUR suggested that it would facilitate the attainment of the honorable gentleman's object if the matter were referred to the Gold Fields Committee, who had a Bill before them in which this question could be included. He would move, as an amendment, that it be referred to the Gold Fields Committee.

MR. GIBBS accepted the suggestion.

MR. SEDDON pointed out that under section 17 of the Mines Act power was given to do all that the honorable member for Collingwood wished to have done. It was in the power of the Governor in granting mineral leases to say that the ground should be open for gold-mining, and he believed that had been done in several cases.

Amendment agreed to, and motion, as amended, agreed to.

GOVERNMENT BANKING ACCOUNT.

On the motion of Mr. BALLANCE, it was ordered, That a Select Committee, to consist of seventeen members, be appointed to consider and report upon the question of determining upon the Government banking arrangements. The Committee to consist of Major Atkinson, Mr. Ballance, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Gisborne, Mr. Hall, Mr. Macandrew, Mr. McLean, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Reader Wood, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Bain, Mr. Reid, and Mr. Bunny.

AUCKLAND MEMBERS.

INTERRUPTED DEBATE.

MR. LUNDON.—I really forget, Sir, what point I had reached when I was interrupted by your having to leave the chair yesterday. I think I had finished referring to the honorable member for Newton, and was going on to refer to the honorable member for Auckland City West (Mr. Hurst). I am not at all deceived in what that honorable gentleman has done. Before the elections came off I had interviews with Mr. Sheehan with regard to the honorable member's election.

It was my desire that he should stand for the district which I have the honor to represent, but he declined to do so. Then I went to the "Hinemoa" to see him with regard to Mr. Whitaker standing for the Waikato. A friend of mine had been put up at the previous election to oppose Mr. McMinn, and the Government used all their influence against Mr. Whitaker, and I was angry at it. I made an arrangement that Mr. Whitaker should stand, and Mr. Sheehan promised not to oppose him. I afterwards saw Mr. Hurst, and he told me, "Mr. Wood is going to stand for Waitemata against J. S. Macfarlane, and I want to keep him out." I thought, "When Hurst gets amongst those lords in the lobbies they will do what they like with him." Therefore I am not astonished at what has occurred here. Now, I come to myself and my party. I came into the House the day of the division on the want-of-confidence motion. There were eight gentlemen besides myself present who had held seats in the Provincial Council. Seeing those gentlemen, I knew, without inquiry, which side it was right to vote upon, and, like an old cavalry horse, I took my place in the ranks of my own party, and went with them into the lobby. After that, I had an invitation to a caucus of the party next day. I went, and I found the most prominent man there was my friend Mr. Hurst. Having only just come into the House I did not know who belonged to our party or who did not; but there were forty-one or forty-two gentlemen present. Then Mr. Gisborne, I think, recommended that the Government should resign, and Mr. Fisher also suggested that he should resign, and that there should be a reconstruction. I thought that would be a good plan; and then Sir George Grey told us he was willing to go out of the Ministry for the good of the party. The feeling of the party was, that there should be a resignation; but no definite conclusion was come to, and the matter was left entirely in the hands of the Government. Then the party was called together again, and the Government came to the conclusion that they would resign. Then the honorable member for Waitemata got up and proposed a resolution that Mr. Macandrew should be leader of the party. That resolution was unanimously carried. Mr. Macandrew, very reluctantly as I think, accepted the position, as he considered he would be putting himself into a position that he would not enjoy. The party, however, was very anxious that he should act, and I, being new to the whole thing, kept quiet. I only suggested that, if the Government wanted to remain on those benches, they should not leave them at all; for, if once they left, they would find it a very hard job to get back again. I knew, also, that my friend Mr. Whitaker was coming down from Auckland. I have known him for thirty-six years, and I knew he was a very bad sailor, and that he was not likely to be coming down here for only a few days. I think I was a very fair prophet on that occasion. Then Mr. Macandrew drew up a resolution appointing a vigilance committee to watch over these new-comers, and see that they did not poach on our preserves, and also to look after the interests of the party.

Mr. London

That consisted of seven, I think, and it was afterwards increased to ten. Mr. Moss was put on the committee, but he gave way to the honorable member for Waitemata. I felt, then, that a load was taken off my heart, because I did not like being on the losing side, and, having known Mr. Wood for about thirty-four years, I was suspicious of him. When the meeting was over, I came out and met Mr. Moss, and shook hands with him, and thanked him for what he had done. I said, "Moss, I am glad you did that. We are safe now that Mr. Wood is on the committee, for I am sure he is working for some object." I then took no further trouble about that committee, for I thought we were in the hands of gentlemen who would not sell their party or bring us into the disgraceful position in which we now are. I did not make many inquiries as to what the committee was doing, because my understanding was that it was to be a secret vigilance committee, and that they would keep their business to themselves, and that the Government would be out in two or three days. Then Mr. Hurst came to me and said, "London, Macandrew will be in the new Cabinet, and Sheehan. That will be two, and I suppose we shall have the honorable member from Canterbury, Mr. Montgomery." And then he said, "We won't have Wood. He is no good. Nobody in Auckland cares about Wood. And as for Moss, I do not think the people would like him there. He is not liked in the House. Those Otago men and Canterbury men would not have it." I said, "Let us take the division first, and then we shall see afterwards who are to be the Cabinet-makers." There was no Cabinet-maker up to that time, except Mr. Hurst himself, and he was Cabinet-making all round. Mr. Wood worked with that committee up to Friday, and on that morning I heard he went to the committee and told them he had given in his allegiance to the Government and could not act with them any further. The Auckland party was then called together, and he made a statement, a portion of which I gave the House yesterday. Of course you all heard the statement which he made here. I did expect he would feel a little ashamed of his action towards the Auckland party, and I must say that I felt ashamed of the exhibition he made of himself on Friday last. Considering the position he has occupied in this House, and which he has held for many years in the country, I thought he would have taken up a better position than he did on that occasion. But it was not the first time. I may say that we had in the Provincial Council of Auckland as responsible government as there is here. That honorable gentleman offered his services to Sir George Grey, who was then Superintendent; but from the moment he got into the Council a wet blanket was thrown over the party. A vote was carried against the Government in favour of the abolition of the provinces, but Mr. Sheehan came in and got the vote rescinded. I forgot to say that, after the vote was carried against the late Government, the honorable member for Newton (Mr. Swanson) said, "As Mr. Pyke has come over to us, and we have a majority of one, the Government ought not to leave the

benches. We can reverse the vote. Why not rescind it?" But that resolution was not put. Mr. Wood and himself took another course, and that put a wet blanket upon it. My view at the time was, that we should rescind the vote while the late Government was in power. When Mr. Wood stated here what had happened in the caucus, he called upon me to witness some statement he was making. I could not say "Yes" to that statement, and I could not say "No." A Native was sitting alongside me at the time, and I was telling him what was happening in the caucus, and probably I missed that assertion. If I could bear out the honorable gentleman's statement I should do so very gladly, but, with regard to other statements, I am sorry to say that he did not tell the whole truth. With regard to what fell from the honorable member for Parnell as to Auckland being down in the dirt in former times, I must say I never knew that before. The only dirt upon Auckland is that which has come upon it through these four deserters. That is the only dirt I ever knew of connected with the people of Auckland in politics, or in any other way. The honorable member for Geraldine said that Auckland always had good men in the House, and that the Auckland members always held their own. I believe that most of the members who come from Auckland this time can hold their own in the House. I believe that the present member for Waikato is just as good as Mr. McMinn. I believe that the honorable member for Auckland City West, bad and all as he is, is as good as the gentleman who preceded him. I believe that Major Harris is as good as Mr. Hobbs; and I think I am quite as good as the member who preceded me. Consequently I do not think the change in this House is against Auckland. Then with regard to the question itself, I think those four gentlemen have brought great disgrace upon our province. I have great fault to find with honorable gentlemen on the Government benches with regard to the Native question. I heard the Statement of the Native Minister, and I believe that, if he acts according to that Statement, he will have few friendly Natives in this Island, and that there is a bad future before the Natives and this colony.

Mr. MACANDREW.—If there really is nothing in the paper now in the possession of the honorable member for Newton that might not be proclaimed on the house-top, I think it is a great pity that we should have all this discussion, which must be regarded as a waste of time. I would even now express a hope that the Government will allow this paper to be laid on the table; otherwise an uneasy impression will force itself on my mind. I confess that, as a southern member, I do not feel at all easy over this question, especially after what fell from the honorable member for Eden last night, who related a part of a speech made at Auckland during the last elections by a gentleman who is now one of the most influential members of the Cabinet, and who then told the people of Auckland that the colony was indebted to them upwards of one million of money, and that, if it were not paid, he would take good care to know the reason why. Somehow or

other, I cannot help tracing a connection between that statement and the action of certain members of this House from the Auckland District. I am not going to characterize that action in any terms whatever; but I repeat that the Government will do well to lay the paper on the table. If the colony is indebted to Auckland for a million of money, no doubt it would be no difficult matter to show that the colony is indebted to other districts to a much larger extent. I am prepared to prove that two millions of money have been absolutely abstracted from the Province of Otago, and that we have not received one penny of it back in any shape or form. That has been done chiefly through the Customs revenue of the colony. Therefore I think that, if we go into this kind of settlement of accounts, more than five millions will be required to meet the claims of other districts. I hope that my fears are groundless, and that this mysterious paper will be placed on the table, so that we may know the ins and outs of it at once.

Mr. ANDREWS.—I am inclined to think that the speediest way of getting this paper is to hold our tongues. It is a case of "The more you ring the more I won't come." I have heard it said that the moment the House records its vote and goes on with the business this paper will be voluntarily brought forward. My firm impression is, that that will be done; and I cannot allow myself to take part in this House in forcing the production of it. The honorable member for Newton said that no power on earth would cause him to produce this paper; and I believe his word. What is the use of the House wasting time in trying to get hold of it, when the honorable member says he will not produce it? The best way, in my opinion, is to say no more about it, and to go on with the business. Persons in the confidence of the honorable member say that the paper will then be produced.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I differ very much from the last speaker. I think it is a very unfortunate position to take up, to say that the honorable member for Newton can set the House at defiance. If I were the leader of the House, I should not allow the House to be set at defiance in this way. To my mind, the question has become one of very great importance indeed. A great deal more may be suspected than is contained in the correspondence. If there is nothing more in it than was stated by the honorable member for Waitemata, I say the Government need not be ashamed of what they have done; no blame whatever can be attached to them. But I feel it has a prejudicial effect for an honorable member to say that he has a paper like this in his pocket, and that he will not produce it. The motion proposes that the Committee shall have power to examine on oath. I do not know whether the honorable member for Newton cares for oaths; but I believe he will state the truth, whether on oath or not. As far as the paper is concerned, I believe that literally it does lie on the table. I am sorry that the paper should be acknowledged to exist, and is not produced, which will do a great deal more injury than if it were made public. If it is just, there cannot be the slightest objection

to lay it on the table. If it is unjust, of course I can very well understand the objection. But I believe what was stated by the honorable member for Waitemata, and that there is no more in it. Therefore I see no objection to end the whole matter by laying the memorandum on the table. I will support the motion of the honorable member for Franklin if it goes to a division.

Question put, "That the words of the original motion, proposed to be omitted, stand part of the question;" upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	38
Noes	...	...	...	25
Majority for	...	...	...	13

AYES.

Mr. Andrews,	Mr. Pitt,
Major Atkinson,	Mr. Richardson,
Mr. Bain,	Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Beetham,	Captain Russell,
Mr. Brandon,	Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Bryce,	Mr. Seymour,
Captain Colbeck,	Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Dick,	Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Fulton,	Mr. Sutton,
Mr. Gibbs,	Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Hall,	Colonel Trimble,
Mr. H. Hirst,	Mr. Whitaker,
Mr. Hursthouse,	Mr. Whyte,
Mr. Kelly,	Major Willis,
Captain Kenny,	Mr. Reader Wood,
Mr. Mason,	Mr. Wright.
Mr. Masters,	
Mr. Murray,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mr. Oliver,	Mr. W. J. Hurst,
Mr. Ormond,	Mr. McLean.

NOES.

Mr. Allwright,	Mr. McDonald,
Mr. Ballance,	Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Barron,	Mr. Moss,
Mr. Brown,	Mr. Reid,
Mr. Bunney,	Mr. Seddon,
Mr. De Lantour,	Mr. Speight,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,	Mr. Tawhai,
Mr. George,	Mr. Thomson,
Sir G. Grey,	Mr. Tole,
Major Harris,	Dr. Wallis.
Mr. Ireland,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mr. Lundon,	Mr. Hamlin,
Mr. Macandrew,	Mr. Turnbull.

PAYES.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mr. Acton Adams,	Mr. Reeves,
Mr. Bowen,	Mr. Hislop,
Mr. Driver,	Mr. Stewart,
Mr. Levin,	Mr. Finn,
Mr. McCaughan,	Mr. Pyke,
Mr. Moorhouse,	Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Richmond,	Mr. Shrimski,
Mr. Tomoana,	Major Te Wheoro,
Mr. Wakefield,	Mr. Gisborne.

The amendment was consequently negatived, and the original motion agreed to.

Mr. Turnbull

D. HUTCHISON.

On the motion of Major HARRIS, it was ordered, That the report on the petition of Daniel Hutchison be referred back to the Waste Lands Committee for further consideration.

D. CLIMIE AND J. GWYNNETH.

INTERRUPTED DEBATE.

The interrupted debate was resumed on the question, That a Select Committee be appointed, to consider and report upon the petitions of Daniel Climie, C.E., and John Gwynneth, C.E., both of Wellington. Such Committee to consist of Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Murray, Mr. W. J. Hurst, Mr. Oliver, Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Bryce, Colonel Trimble, Mr. Levin, Mr. Ballance, and the mover; with power to call for persons and papers; three to be a quorum; and to report in fourteen days.

Mr. KELLY would object to the appointment of this Committee on the principle that, once a petition was referred by the House to a Sessional Committee, it was always dealt with by that Committee, and not referred to a special Committee. The reason of that was this: that, if unusual motions of this kind were allowed, and a different practice followed, there would be no end to the formation of these Committees. His principal reason for objecting to this motion was, that the decision which governed this question ought to govern all future motions of a similar character. He intended to oppose the formation of this Committee, and he hoped the Government would also oppose it, and thus prevent a precedent being set up for bringing forward such motions in future.

Mr. HALL entirely concurred with the honorable gentleman who had just sat down. Unless under very peculiar and exceptional circumstances, of which the House at the time must be the judge, a petition which in the ordinary course had gone to the Public Petitions Committee should not be taken from the cognizance of that Committee. In this case, so far as he could gather, no sufficient reason whatever had been shown for the appointment of the proposed special Committee. The Chairman of the Petitions Committee did not say that that Committee could not deal with the petition and ought not to deal with it. On the contrary, it was to be inferred from his remarks that it was a subject the consideration of which would fairly come within the functions of the Petitions Committee. He (Mr. Hall) trusted, therefore, the House would uphold its own order, that petitions of this kind should be referred to the Public Petitions Committee. If such a precedent were allowed, in any case in which any honorable member took a special interest there would be an endeavour to obtain the appointment of a special Committee. He trusted the House would uphold the practice established of having petitions dealt with by the Public Petitions Committee.

Mr. MURRAY said the honorable member for New Plymouth had stated that this was unusual—it had never been done before. The honorable member for Selwyn said the House was about to establish a precedent. He (Mr. Murray) would

point out that this was not the first time this had been done, when it had been found that the Public Petitions Committee was unable to devote sufficient time to fully inquire into certain matters, special Committees had been appointed for the purpose. He would point out the case of Joshua Goodfellow. That case was several times before the Public Petitions Committee, but a decision could not be arrived at. Ultimately it was referred to a special Committee, and a decision was come to. This was not merely a personal question as far as Mr. Climie was concerned—it referred to the construction of a very important section of a very important railway, and it was of importance for a special Committee to consider whether that railway should be constructed on such gradients and plans as would make it remunerative, or upon other plans and gradients that would prevent it being a payable work. There was no question of precedent involved. The Public Petitions Committee had quite as much work before it as it could do faithfully and well, without encumbering it with this very important question, which would take at least a week's time to consider. He trusted that, in justice to other petitioners, the time of the Public Petitions Committee would not be so occupied, and that this special Committee would be agreed to.

Mr. STEWART said that probably the better course would be to adjourn the debate until to-morrow, when the honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutchison) would be in his place. With regard to the remarks of the honorable member for New Plymouth, he confessed he was surprised at such a broad proposition being laid down as that a petition presented to the House should not be referred to a special Committee because it had been referred to the Public Petitions Committee. Now, that Committee was appointed to deal with petitions of a general character, not demanding any special or peculiar knowledge; but this petition was one demanding some special consideration. He apprehended that, in order to do justice to this petition, the special Committee would require to devote several days to its consideration. If it were relegated to the Public Petitions Committee, the result would be either to hurry unnecessarily the consideration of this petition, or to delay other business for a long time. He quite agreed with the Premier that, as a general rule, the reference of petitions to special Committees should be obviated as much as possible; but, in the case of any petition which involved consideration of a peculiar or technical nature, he apprehended that the House would at once assent to the appointment of a Select Committee. As to the members of these Select Committees, it was of course in the power of the House to remove any objectionable names. He confessed he did not understand what special interest the honorable member for New Plymouth had in resisting the appointment of a Select Committee. Whatever the result of the division on this particular question might be, he submitted that it would be a very dangerous thing to lay down the precedent sought to be established by the honorable member for New Plymouth. He

thought the debate had better be adjourned until the honorable member for Wellington City was in his place.

Mr. ANDREWS said it would be a very unwise precedent to take advice from the honorable member for New Plymouth. He could not forget that that honorable member placed a motion on the Paper to the effect that the quorum of his Committee should be reduced to three. If the decision of a Committee with its quorum so reduced was to be taken as final, it was narrowing things down in a way that the House never intended. He would vote for the appointment of this special Committee. He would rather vote that all members not then on any public Committee should be appointed a Committee to investigate this case. He had taken some trouble to examine the list of members on public Committees, and he would read the names of honorable members who were not on any Public Committee. First of all there was Mr. Brandon. Then, again, there was the honorable member for Waikouaiti (Mr. McLean); then came the name of the honorable member for Cheviot (Mr. Saunders); then the names of the honorable member for Wairarapa (Mr. Beetham), the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart), the honorable member for Gladstone (Mr. Studholme), the honorable member for Napier (Mr. Sutton), and the honorable member for Waikato (Mr. Whyte). If there was anything which the House could relegate to those honorable gentlemen it would be doing a good turn to relegate it, and he thought they might very well be appointed a Committee to investigate this case.

Mr. J. T. FISHER thought the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart) had moved the further adjournment of the debate. The honorable member in charge of this motion stated that he had to go away at four o'clock to a very important Finance Committee, and wished to have this matter postponed. He (Mr. Fisher) begged to move, That the debate be further adjourned until to-morrow.

Debate adjourned.

EAST AND WEST COAST RAILWAY.

Mr. SAUNDERS, in moving the motion standing his name, said he would not occupy the time of the House in saying anything in support of this motion. It would be enough for the House to know that this petition had been signed by between four hundred and five hundred settlers interested in the districts referred to, and contained information which would be useful to the House in deciding the very important question involved therein.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the petition of the settlers and others interested in Waiau, Hurunui, and Awatere Districts, in favour of the Hanwell Plains route for the railway line between the east and west coasts of the Middle Island, be printed."—(Mr. Saunders.)

Mr. TURNBULL objected to the printing of these petitions. If they once began the practice of printing these petitions the House would be deluged with them. The House must look to the cost. All these little things told up very

much indeed. He saw nothing to be gained by printing the petition. It was always accessible, he imagined, to anybody who wished to see it. If they agreed to print these petitions the Government Printing Office would be kept entirely going by them, and nothing else. No reason whatever had been shown why this special petition should be printed. It was a very bad system to commence.

Mr. SHRIMSKI would also object to the spending of money in the printing of petitions merely to enable certain people to have their names recorded in the Blue Books.

Mr. MURRAY apprehended that the names of the petitioners were not to be printed, but the petition itself. He would support the motion.

Mr. SEDDON would support the motion. Printing the petitions was the only means afforded to the House of acquiring some very valuable information.

Question put, "That the motion be agreed to;" upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	...	35
Noes	...	...	...	...	26
Majority for	...	...	...	...	9

AYES.

Major Atkinson,	Mr. Ormond,
Mr. Bain,	Mr. Reid,
Mr. Beetham,	Mr. Richardson,
Captain Colbeck,	Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Dick,	Mr. Seymour,
Mr. Gibbs,	Mr. Shephard,
Mr. Gisborne,	Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Hall,	Mr. Sutton,
Mr. W. J. Hurst,	Mr. Tainui,
Mr. Johnston,	Mr. Tawhai,
Mr. Kelly,	Mr. Tomoana,
Captain Kenny,	Colonel Trimble,
Mr. Levin,	Mr. Whitaker,
Mr. Mason,	Major Willis,
Mr. Masters,	Mr. Wright.
Mr. McLean,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mr. Murray,	Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Oliver,	Mr. Seddon.

NOES.

Mr. Allwright,	Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Andrews,	Mr. Moss,
Mr. Ballance,	Mr. Pitt,
Mr. Barron,	Captain Russell,
Mr. Bunney,	Mr. Stewart,
Mr. De Lautour,	Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Finn,	Mr. Thomson,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,	Mr. Tole,
Major Harris,	Mr. Turnbull,
Mr. Hislop,	Dr. Wallis.
Mr. Hursthouse,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mr. Ireland,	Mr. George,
Mr. Lundon,	Mr. Shrimski.
Mr. McDonald,	

NORTHERN MAORI DISTRICT.

The interrupted debate was resumed on the question, That the attention of the House be drawn, as a question of privilege, to the allegation

Mr. Turnbull

contained in the petition of Hirini Rawiri Taiwhanga, respecting an infringement of "The Disqualification Act, 1878," and then to move the appointment of a Select Committee to report on the same. Such Committee to consist of Mr. Brandon, Mr. De Lautour, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Hislop, Mr. Murray, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Rolleston, and the mover; five to form a quorum.

Mr. GISBORNE said that when the debate was interrupted he was proceeding to show that the Maori race had a special disability imposed on it in consequence of the passing of the Disqualification Act last year, and he was induced to point that out in consequence of the remarks of the Premier and the honorable member for Waikouaiti. Those remarks required some reply, their purport being to the effect that this should be treated as an ordinary case, and that if the House considered the sitting member disqualified there was no reason why an Act of Indemnity should be passed by the House. Now, he wished to point out that there were special circumstances in the case of this Native. Under the Disqualification Act which existed for some years before the Disqualification Act of last year was passed, the Native members of the House had a special privilege, which was, that they were not disqualified by holding office under the General Government; and any Act taking away that privilege was an Act specially affecting the Native race, and should therefore, according to the rules of the House, have been translated into Maori. He did not say that the Act was in consequence illegal, or that in strict law it was not the business of the Natives to know the purport of that Act. That was an Act specially affecting them, and there were special circumstances in the case which would lead to their not knowing what the effect of the Act was. There was nothing in the Act of 1878 which specially called the attention of the Natives to it, and yet it took away from them a privilege which they had enjoyed for some time previously; and it did not take it away at once, because it said the provision should come into force from and after the termination of the then existing Parliament. But he did not rest the claim of the Natives on special grounds. He said, "Treat them as you would treat Europeans under similar circumstances." Now, what had been the case with regard to European members of the House? In the year 1876 two sets of these cases occurred. There were two members disqualified in consequence of being in receipt of fees at the time they were elected. One of those cases was referred to by the Hon. the Premier—the case of Mr. Harper. That perhaps was not an analogous case to the present, as the honorable gentleman was counsel to the Government with regard to the regulation of friendly societies. But there was the case of the honorable member for Waitaki, which was quite analogous. That honorable gentleman was Crown Prosecutor at Oamaru, and was receiving fees. He was probably receiving fees annually to a larger amount than was received in the shape of salary by this Native Assessor. What was done in that case? Immediately after the commencement of the ses-

sion of 1876, an Act was passed which provided that in the case of persons receiving fees they should not be disqualified if they resigned before they were elected; and that Act was made retrospective. It provided,—

“The provisions of this Act shall extend and apply to any election of a member of the present House of Representatives, and to any person as in this Act mentioned who may have been elected to be a member of the said House while holding any such office, commission, or employment as aforesaid; but this provision shall only be operative in cases where the person so elected shall have resigned such office and ceased to be engaged in such commission or employment before taking his seat as such member.”

The effect of that Act with regard to the honorable member for Waitaki was to indemnify him and validate his election on condition that he resigned his office. That was an analogous case, because there was no question, as implied by the Hon. the Premier, that Natives were to have seats in the House and still hold office as Assessors. The honorable member for the Northern Maori District had resigned his office, and it was not intended that any Indemnity Bill should allow the Natives to sit while holding paid offices. Under the circumstances, and according to the precedent which he had cited, it would not be fair or equitable to apply the strict rules of disqualification to the case of the honorable member. But there were still stronger cases, and the circumstances of them being still within the recollection of the Premier ought to have prevented that honorable gentleman saying what he did. In 1876 not only was one honorable member disqualified because he held a trivial office, but the whole Executive Council was disqualified for infringing the provisions of the Act, and amongst the members of that Executive was the present Premier.

Mr. HALL.—I did not receive a salary.

Mr. GISBORNE did not care whether that was so or not. The question that arose was this: They appointed a greater number of members of the Executive than was allowed by the Civil List Act and the Disqualification Act, and, although the present Premier did not receive a salary, he was entitled to the allowance appertaining to the position of a Minister, such as travelling allowance. This brought the Premier under the provisions of the Disqualification Act. It was not known at the time what particular member of the Executive was disqualified—in fact, they were all disqualified. All the members of that Executive who were holding seats in the House of Representatives were holding them illegally, and the present Premier was holding his seat in the Legislative Council illegally. “The Executive Councillors Indemnity Act, 1876,” showed that such was the case, for it said that the Committees appointed by the Legislative Council and the House of Representatives to inquire into the matter reported “that they were of opinion that the provisions of ‘The Disqualification Act, 1870,’ had been infringed by members of the present Ministry.” And then the Attorney-General—the gentleman specially

appointed to give the Government advice on all legal questions—the member who, above all members, should have known what the law was—had doubly disqualified himself. And that gentleman was the present Attorney-General. That honorable gentleman may have been the superfluous member of the Executive; and, ignoring the provisions of the Attorney-General’s Act, which said that an Attorney-General should be appointed who should not be a member of the Assembly, he advised the Governor to appoint him outside the provisions of that Act. The Committee of the House of Representatives reported with regard to that honorable gentleman,—

“—that they had considered whether any of the provisions of ‘The Attorney-General’s Act, 1866,’ had been infringed by the present Ministry, and that there seemed to be considerable doubt whether the said Act does not limit the Governor to the selection of some person not a member of the Assembly as Attorney-General, and that if there be such limitation, then that there has been a clear infringement of the provisions of the said Act.”

To indemnify the members of that Executive Council, the Indemnity Act provided,—

“Each and every of them shall be and is hereby indemnified, freed, and discharged from and against all penalties, forfeitures, incapacities, and disabilities whatsoever (if any) incurred or to be incurred by them or any or either of them, for or by reason of their several appointments as aforesaid or any of them, or for or by reason of any infringement of ‘The Disqualification Act, 1870,’ ‘The Civil List Act 1863 Amendment Act, 1873,’ and ‘The Attorney-General’s Act, 1866,’ or any or either of the said Acts, in relation to the said appointments or any or either of them, or for or by reason of any of the matters aforesaid.”

The effect of those words was to replace those honorable gentlemen in the seats which they were holding illegally in both branches of the Legislature. And who were those gentlemen who were thus indemnified? They were Major Atkinson, Dr. Pollen, Mr. F. Whitaker, Sir Donald McLean, Mr. John Hall, Mr. J. D. Ormond, Mr. E. Richardson, Mr. C. C. Bowen, and Mr. G. McLeau. Here was a precedent which conclusively proved his case, and, if by accident there had been an infringement of the Disqualification Act by this Native, the course the House ought to pursue was clear. It should pass an Indemnity Act, and make the honorable gentleman’s seat secure. It grieved him to hear the Premier, to whom so much had been forgiven, claim in advance the exaction of the utmost farthing from this unfortunate Native. On the other hand, he was much gratified to hear the generous sentiment expressed by the honorable member for Geraldine, when he said that if any equitable case was made out for the Native he would certainly support a Bill of Indemnity. He (Mr. Gisborne) hoped that would be the feeling which would actuate the majority of the House, and that the House would not hold out as its practice that it thought right to apply Acts of Indemnity to Europeans when they technically

infringed the Disqualification Act, and to withhold them from Natives when they did the same.

Mr. WHITAKER said he was authorized by the mover of the motion to move an amendment to the following effect:—"To leave out all the words after 'the same,' with a view to inserting the following words: 'Such Committee to consist of seven members, to be selected by the Selections Committee, who shall appoint a Chairman and fix the time for the meeting of the Committee. Three to be a quorum; and to report in a week.'"

Major ATKINSON moved the adjournment of the debate, as notice had been given by an honorable member of a Bill to deal with the question, and it would be better to take the general discussion on that Bill.

Debate adjourned.

TAXATION.

The following motion was called on:—Mr. WHITAKER to move, "That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when a substantial change shall be made in the incidence of taxation in the Colony of New Zealand, and that measures be introduced during the present session to effect this."

Mr. WHITAKER.—I ask leave to withdraw this motion. In doing so I may say that the only reason for my placing it on the Order Paper was that, amongst all the great liberal measures promised in the Governor's Speech which was brought down by the late Government, I saw no reference made to this most important subject—no promise given by the then Government that they would do anything in the way of changing the incidence of taxation. Since then, however, a change has taken place in the state of affairs, and I feel confident that the gentlemen who are now on those benches will really carry out liberal measures, and see that justice is done to the great masses of the people; and therefore I do not think it necessary to move the motion.

Mr. GISBORNE.—Sir, I submit that the honorable gentleman had no right to make a speech and attack honorable gentlemen on this side of the House in the way he has done, and then say he does not intend to proceed with his motion.

Mr. WHITAKER.—Why did the honorable member not call me to order?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable member intimated that he did not intend to proceed with his motion.

Mr. GISBORNE.—I did not call the honorable gentleman to order, because he said he would ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Mr. THOMSON.—I submit, Sir, that you should not have allowed the honorable gentleman to proceed to cast reflections upon honorable members on this side of the House, when you knew he was not going to move the motion. I think it was your duty to prevent him proceeding to make the remarks he did make. I submit that point for your consideration, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I admit it would have been better for the honorable gentleman not to make

Mr. Gisborne

any remarks when he intimated his intention not to move the motion; but there is a certain amount of indulgence given to young members.

KAWAU.

The following motion was called on:—Mr. McLEAN to move, "That, on account of the hardening effect the exemption from all taxation has had on the human mind, the Island of Kawau be included within the boundaries of the County of Rodney."

Mr. SPEAKER.—As the honorable member for Waikouaiti is not present, this motion lapses.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I hope this motion will not be allowed to lapse.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Waikouaiti not being in his place, the motion cannot be discussed.

Sir G. GREY.—Some protection should be thrown by the Chair around us. We have seen one honorable member allowed to throw grievous imputations upon us—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have not called on the motion. The honorable member for Waikouaiti not being in his place, the motion lapses.

Sir G. GREY.—I move the adjournment of the House. I object to our not being protected in some way in this House. I say it is not sufficient to excuse a speech such as the honorable gentleman made by saying that great freedom must be permitted to, or some allowance made for, young members. I say that it is not fair—

Mr. HALL.—I rise to order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honorable member is in order in moving the adjournment of the House.

Mr. HALL.—But I question whether he is in order in the remarks he has made reflecting on the conduct of yourself. If the honorable gentleman is not satisfied with the conduct of the Speaker, it is his duty to bring the question forward after formal notice. I shall make objection without that.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If I commit any error, I am quite willing that every honorable member should discuss my conduct. The honorable member for the Thames is in order.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I rise to a point of order. I do not wish to take advantage of the statement that I am a young member, and that therefore I had latitude.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You are out of order. The honorable member for the Thames is addressing the House.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I think the adjournment of the House should take place until some means are taken to protect honorable members from the attacks continually made on them. The honorable gentleman who just rose to a point of order, the other night made a very gross attack upon myself. He stated that some communications had taken place between myself and the honorable member for Tuapeka, by which, in some way, the vote of the member for Tuapeka was influenced.

Mr. WHITAKER.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—He said distinctly that such was the case—that if such things had not been done we should walk into different lobbies. I do

not know what those words meant. They were absolutely untrue.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I rise to a personal explanation. I did not say that. I absolutely deny it. I stated that communications from the honorable gentleman and communications from the honorable member for Tuapeka had been seen by me, but not communications between those honorable gentlemen.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not hear the honorable member.

Mr. WHITAKER.—What I stated was, that I had seen communications from the honorable member for the Thames, and that I had seen communications from the honorable member for Tuapeka, affecting the state of political parties in this House, which communications would cause the honorable member for Tuapeka to walk into one lobby and the honorable member for the Thames to walk into the other lobby; but not communications between those honorable gentlemen.

Sir G. GREY.—I say no such communications whatever passed that would have separated us. That I absolutely deny; and I say some protection must be thrown around members of this House. The honorable gentleman just now was allowed, when he ought not to have done it, to make a speech casting the grossest possible reflections upon myself and my friends. No apology was made; and no reasonable redress was afforded, because he withdrew his motion. Nominally, he withdrew his motion, but he made a speech in which an attack of that kind took place. Then, the honorable member, Mr. McLean, has put a notice upon the Paper with the intention of damaging me in the eyes of the whole country. That was the deliberate intention of the thing; and he will not appear in his place to allow that motion to be brought forward, and to allow me to make a reply. Now, I say the House should adjourn until the honorable member appears in his place and brings this motion forward. My answer to the honorable member's motion is this: that the Island of Kawau enjoys no privilege beyond any other island in New Zealand, so far as I know. Every single island has, from a sense of justice on the part of this House, without any application from myself, without my having said a word upon the subject, been exempted from the counties; and for the very plain reason that it would be impossible for the inhabitants of the islands to attend the meetings in the counties. It would be impossible for them to exercise any voice whatever in reference to the proceedings of County Councils, when anything took place in them. Further, the islands never have had one penny of public money expended on them, like Road Boards in other places, which receive subsidies. They have cheerfully paid their share of the taxation of the country, and very heavy burdens indeed have fallen upon poor men in a great variety of instances. They have done that, and they have never had one penny returned to them; but their money, paid in taxation, has been taken from them to give subsidies to other places. Then they have derived no advantage whatever from the Govern-

ment of the country such as other places do. In the special island named in the motion no police cases ever occur. The Courts of the country have never been troubled with any cases from that island; and the country has never been put to any expense whatever. Then, again, large contributions have been made from the island, and no return whatever has been received in any way. The roads made there equal, I believe, the roads in any other part of New Zealand. That has been done entirely from the resources of the inhabitants of the island, without a single half-penny of money having been received from any other part of New Zealand in aid of it. I say that, if a motion of this kind is put on the Paper for the purpose of damaging one man, then the honorable gentleman should be compelled to appear in his place and support the motion of which he has given notice. I say that a more cruel and more unmanly thing has never taken place—nothing more unmanly. The honorable member for Waipa may say “No;” but I say that nothing has been more unfair than his conduct in this House to myself. It was my misfortune to be compelled to oppose that honorable gentleman in a demand made by himself, or friends of his, for an enormous grant of land, and ever since he has pursued me with hostility.

Mr. WHITAKER.—I rise to a point of order. That statement is absolutely without foundation. I challenge the honorable gentleman to prove it.

Sir G. GREY.—I ask that the papers upon the subject be produced from the office. I affirm that the honorable gentleman waited upon Mr. Sheehan, accompanied by another honorable gentleman, a client of his, and made this demand: The Government had formerly obtained the Native rights over a block of land consisting of 250,000 acres—that is, certain Native rights. It was alleged that the honorable gentleman's father, Mr. Brissenden, and other persons had paid certain sums of money to the Natives upon that block of 250,000 acres; and the colony paid to that honorable gentleman's father £5,000, which were sums they were believed to have expended in extinguishing certain rights. The colony having done that—

Mr. HALL.—I am sorry to interrupt the honorable gentleman, but I cannot possibly see that it is in order to introduce such a subject upon the present question.

Mr. WHITAKER.—If the Premier would allow me, I would say that I wish the honorable gentleman to go on, because I know nothing at all about the transaction he is alluding to. I believe that eight years ago something of the kind took place, but I know absolutely nothing of it. So far as I am concerned—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for the Thames is entitled to proceed with his speech. You will have an opportunity of speaking afterwards.

Sir G. GREY.—The honorable gentleman says he had nothing to do with that transaction; but then he or his friends set up a claim to the extent of 320,000 acres of land, including this block of 250,000 acres. I ask the Government to produce the telegram in the office from Mr. Sheehan

recording the whole of the facts, a few months ago. That will show what they offered us. They offered to relinquish the claims that had sprung up again over this same piece of land which had been paid for previously; and, having done that, they said they would relinquish those claims if allowed to complete claims over 40,000 acres of that block. That was the proposition made to the Government. I was compelled from a sense of duty—and any one who reads the telegrams will see that I was necessarily compelled—with other persons, to decline to allow that proposal to be accepted: that is, I was obliged to put myself in opposition to a great land company, negotiating, I believe, entirely against the interests of the colony at large. Not only that, but I was informed that in order to keep the claim over this land their surveys had been made by stealth.

Mr. WHITAKER.—Does the honorable member say that—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must request the honorable member for Waipa to wait.

Sir G. GREY.—I am stating nothing but what is a matter of record. The honorable gentleman knows as well as I do that he waited upon Mr. Sheehan and made those propositions. It is all on record that those things took place only a few months ago. But ever since that I have been pursued with relentless hostility. I ask honorable members to recollect the first speech made by the honorable gentleman. It was the most absurd thing possible. He accused me of reading Carlyle, and copying from him when I spoke to this House—a thing I never did. He then went on to say that when I was speaking to a public meeting he found that I copied a page or two from Froude's book, "England and her Colonies." I never saw the book in my life. I never read it. I only give that as one instance, to show that I have been pursued with unrelenting hostility. Nothing could be more malicious than the remarks of the honorable member for Waikouaiti. Nothing could be more unfair than to put a motion on the Paper, and to absent himself when the motion was to come on. He dared not have brought it forward. I know there are very few things he will not do, but that he dared not do. I am perfectly certain that he absented himself from design. Again, I say that a man who had really honorable sentiments would be the very man to wait in this House and bring on this motion, so as to give me an opportunity of answering him when he made the accusations implied by this motion. He should not allow this motion to lapse, so that I could not explain fully to the House that the motion was made out of pure malice; that it had no foundation in fact; that there was not a single island along that coast included in a county; and that the reasons why they were left out of the counties were obvious. The inhabitants of the islands had paid large sums of money annually to the taxation of the country, and they had never had a single penny returned to them. They were people who never offended against the laws, and no police case has ever originated among them. For twenty years, I believe, that island has been occupied, and no single police case has ever occurred.

Sir G. Grey

If some protection is not thrown around us in this House, I do not know what our fate is to be, because in every way we are attacked. The honorable member for Waikouaiti used the most shameful language in regard to the late Government. He said that great scandals would be brought out; that the pigeon-holes would be searched. I say this in the presence of this House, and of New Zealand: that I have left behind me in the offices every telegram, every letter of a public nature that I wrote, or copies of them; and I believe that every private letter I wrote—except to my own sisters and immediate relations—is there. I ask that copies of them be laid on the table of the House; so that the whole of New Zealand may have an opportunity of judging what my correspondence and conduct have been. If that is done, then this telegram will come out, which will show that what I have stated in regard to the honorable member for Waipa is an absolute fact, and that such a claim has been set up for 320,000 acres, of which 250,000 acres—

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

WAITARA HARBOUR BOARD LAND AND BORROWING BILL.

Colonel TRIMBLE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was almost similar to a measure which had been before Parliament in a previous session. The object of the previous Bill was to place in the jurisdiction of the Harbour Board the banks of the river and some land at the mouth of the river. So far the present Bill was identical with the measure of last year. The first part of the Schedule gave the boundaries of these portions of land, and that part of the Schedule was copied exactly from the Bill of last year. There was, however, a portion of land, containing 4 acres 3 roods, which had been omitted by accident from the previous Bill. The object of the Bill before the House was to give the land on the banks of the river to the Harbour Board. The sections omitted from the Schedule last year were upon the banks of the river: in fact, they were mainly in the river itself. At a certain point the river was divided into two branches, and in the original survey of the Town of Raleigh some of the allotments were placed in one of the branches of the river. If sold the Board would have no control whatever over the land. Some four or five allotments were allocated to Maoris, and these could not be dealt with. Some allotments had already been sold to Europeans, and these could not be dealt with. These allotments would have to be bought back at a price very much beyond their value; and, to prevent anything of that kind, the Board asked the House to agree to include the four acres in the Schedule of this Bill. At first sight this might look like giving valuable endowments to the Harbour Board; but in reality that was not the case. He could say,

from his own personal knowledge of the district, that the land which was included in the Schedule was utterly valueless for any purpose except for the purpose of the Board. There was one new feature contained in this Bill. The Board found it necessary to raise some funds in order to increase the wharf accommodation, and they proposed to obtain power under this Bill to borrow a sum not exceeding £10,000. The actual sum required at the present time to complete certain improvements would amount to £3,500, made up in this way: For wharf accommodation, £2,500 would be required. The sum required for making the Waitara Bridge safe was stated to be £500 or £600. The bridge had been constructed in rather a costly manner; it was sinking considerably, and a great deal of damage had already been done to it. It was absolutely essential that the Board should have the power to raise funds for carrying on necessary improvements in the harbour. He did not know that he need go into the matter further, as the subject had been fully discussed on a previous occasion, with the exception of the part of the Bill relating to the loan.

Mr. THOMSON fully expected the Government to make a few remarks in regard to this Bill. It so happened that the Bill did not refer to a very large area of land—not more than 400 acres. At the same time a very important principle was involved in the Bill. Last year a great many Bills came to this House. Those Bills first of all constituted Harbour Boards, and there were clauses endowing those Harbour Boards. Those Bills were all referred to the Waste Lands Committee. Mr. F. Whitaker, who was then a member of the House, moved that the endowment clauses should be struck out, and the endowment clauses were struck out of every Bill that came before the House last year. This Bill was the first of a crowd of Bills they would have if they passed it. The Harbour Board was now constituted, and this was simply an endowment Bill. The number of Bills of a similar kind that would be brought down this session would depend very much upon the action taken by the House in regard to this Bill. He thought it right that these remarks should be made to the House. He was a little surprised to find that the Government were going to allow this Bill to go by without challenge. He did not make these remarks by any means from any feeling against this particular district; but if this Bill passed they must expect any number of Bills of the same kind to be brought down very shortly.

Mr. HALL thought the honorable gentleman was rather in a hurry in expressing surprise at the Government not saying anything upon this Bill. When the honorable gentleman who moved the second reading sat down he (Mr. Hall) was engaged in conversation with an honorable gentleman on the subject of another Bill on the Order Paper. The Government had considered this Bill, and believed it to be a very good measure, such as it was desirable the House should pass. It was true there were now grants proposed to be made to the Harbour Board—in one case 250 acres, and in another 150 acres of land.

The honorable gentleman would find that this was merely the foreshore of the harbour. Bills had been passed by the House in previous sessions giving land so situated to Harbour Boards. These were lands such as he thought should be placed under the control of these Boards. Some town sections which it was proposed to hand over to the Board were, practically, in the middle of the river. The Government had not neglected its duty in this matter. The 4th clause of the Bill would require some consideration. It said, "The lands hereby authorized to be granted to the Board, having a frontage on tidal water, shall be deemed to be a wharf within the meaning of the said Act." The effect of that provision might be, that no person would be able to land goods upon ground fronting even his own private property without paying wharfage dues.

Colonel TRIMBLE wished to explain that this was not intended.

Mr. HALL said the explanation was satisfactory. Still, he called attention to the point; and he thought it showed that the Government had not neglected that watchful interest which it would be the endeavour of this Government to take in private Bills. No doubt it would be an arduous undertaking to look after them; but the Government thought that private Bills had been somewhat neglected in the past, and had been allowed too much to take their chance. He did not say that, with the time at their disposal, they would be able to look as closely after private Bills as they could wish; but they recognized that it was the duty of any Government to lead the House in matters of this kind, and they would discharge that duty to the best of their ability.

Mr. SHRIMSKI was very glad to hear the honorable gentleman say that it was the duty of the Government to aid and assist honorable members in bringing forward these Bills. Since the honorable gentleman had said that the Government would support the granting of endowments to the Waitara Harbour Board, he begged to give notice that it was his intention to introduce the Kakanui and Moeraki Harbour Board Bills for the same purpose.

Mr. MACANDREW said he might be allowed to say that he hoped the second reading of this Bill would be agreed to. He had the pleasure of visiting the Waitara some time ago, and he was of opinion that the people of New Plymouth had made a great mistake. He thought it would have been far better for them to have concentrated the expenditure at present being incurred on harbour works on improving the harbour at Waitara instead of at New Plymouth. He thought the Waitara was a most important harbour, and that what was now asked for might be legitimately conceded. He thought, however much they might condemn an indiscriminate passing of harbour endowments, that this was a case which might be taken on its merits, and therefore he hoped the House would agree to the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. KELLY hoped the House would agree to the second reading. The Bill was the same as the one introduced last year, the only difference

being, as the mover had said, that the present measure included borrowing powers. As to the endowments for Harbour Boards, it was quite true that, in a former session, the House decided that endowment clauses should be excised; but that decision did not include the foreshore, or lands adjacent to it and necessary for harbour improvement. This Bill provided that the Board should be so endowed. With the exception of three or four acres, this endowment was the foreshore of the river, and waste lands on the seabach. He thought it was necessary that power should be given to the Board to make such improvements in the navigation of the river as were considered advisable. He hoped the House would agree to the second reading of the Bill.

Sir G. GREY trusted the House would agree to the second reading of this Bill. He thought the Waitara Harbour would form a most useful harbour for that part of the country. He thought it could very easily be made a useful harbour, and he hoped every encouragement would be given to the people of New Plymouth and Waitara in their efforts to turn it into a good harbour. It would be a good thing for the whole of that coast; and he hoped the second reading would be agreed to.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR did not think the question was so much whether this Bill had any merits or not as whether the House was in possession of sufficient information on the subject. They were told that there was no endowment; yet there was nothing in the Schedule to indicate that this land was between high and low water-marks. Of course, this Parliament was not necessarily bound to what was done in the last Parliament, but honorable members must know that the practice of bringing down Harbour Board Bills rose to be such a great nuisance that it was decided that all such Bills should be put a stop to, and the Government be brought face to face with the question, and have it settled on one basis how these Bills should be dealt with—that the Government should determine what harbours were absolutely necessary for the colony. And that would have to be done. It seemed to him that the Government had neglected one of its functions. It ought to state that certain harbours were colonial harbours; and they should not be left to the mercy of any Harbour Board that might be created. It was a crime to allow such harbours as those of Wellington, Dunedin, Lyttelton, and Auckland to be placed at the will of any nominated Board that crept into existence. The colony should protect harbours like these; and in dealing with all minor harbours the Government should bring down some scheme on a fair basis, and not allow honorable members, whether supporters of the Government or of the Opposition, to scramble in this way, and their Bills to depend on the good-will of the Government. It was acting on a wrong principle. They had no information about this Bill. There were four or five hundred acres in the Schedule, and town land, too. What the land was worth, they did not know. They had no plans or schedules of valuation; and if that House simply passed a Bill, trusting to its Waste Lands Committee or

Mr. Kelly

to another branch of the Legislature to deal fairly in these matters, it made a laughing-stock of itself, as it did two years ago, when the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) and himself were alone found to protest against seventeen Harbour Bills being despatched as fast as the clauses could be read. There were seventeen honorable members who adhered to their own and each others' Bills. His honorable friend the member for Waitaki (Mr. Shrimski) had given notice that he intended to introduce two Bills. Why should not every honorable member do the same who had a harbour in his district? He had often wondered that in dealing with these North Island harbours the late, or, indeed, any Government, had not come down and said there were a certain number of harbours on the East and West Coasts which were absolutely necessary for the safety of shipping and the best interests of the colony, and that endowments of land in the North Island must be set aside for these specific harbours, which, in the opinion of the Government, ought to be colonial harbours. That was the way in which they should be dealt with. They had never been dealt with fairly. The East Coast was practically neglected, and the West Coast also. There had been a Harbour Board at Napier. They had had small borrowing powers, and the money they had raised had, in many people's opinion, been absolutely wasted. It was quite time the colony was grappling with the harbour question—quite time that the Government undertook the responsibility of saying what harbours should be protected. He objected to this Harbour Board Endowment Bill, or any Bill of a like nature. The House had no information before it. It was a kind of a log-rolling scramble, which they knew the Government was not averse to, and he had a right to protest against it. In order to test the feeling of the House, he should move the adjournment of the debate until the honorable members had more information on the subject before them.

Mr. MOORHOUSE wished to say a few words on this question, having a very good knowledge of the district. He followed his honorable friend the member for Port Chalmers in the expression of opinion that this Bill was an exceedingly useful measure. He only objected to it on one score, and that was, that clause 5 was an infraction of the principle which he thought ought to govern mainly the borrowing powers of all counties, Road Boards, municipalities, and harbours. He thought the Legislature ought not to fix any amount that should be borrowed by these bodies; but there ought to be published throughout the Empire a determination on the part of the Legislature of New Zealand not to be liable for municipal debts. He protested against the limitation of borrowing powers of this sort. He thought it was a great principle, consequent on the abolition of the provinces—on the change in the Constitution—that succeeding institutions should be unfettered in their borrowing powers, and unprotected in the matter of their liability. He happened to know the district affected by this particular measure very well, and he was of opinion that the endowments in the Bill were

necessary to the Harbour Board, and they inflicted no wrong on contiguous interests. He certainly could not regard them as likely to have any prejudicial effect upon the colony generally. These endowments were, in his humble opinion, rightly the property of the Harbour Board, and he thought that to endow the Board with those scraps of land was a very proper thing. The only thing he objected to was the limitation of the borrowing powers of the Board. He would object to this, because he thought it implied a guarantee on the part of the colony for the liabilities of the Board. If they indicated a limitation, it implied an obligation. If they prescribed that any Board should only borrow £10,000, in his opinion it followed as a natural sequence that the public creditor would imagine that the colony was pledged in respect of the debts of the Harbour Board, or municipality, or whatever it might be, to the extent limited. When the Bill went into Committee, he should move the expunging of clause 5.

Mr. SHEEHAN did not intend to oppose this Bill. With regard to what had been said by the honorable member for Ashley, he did not think the insertion of a clause regulating the amount up to which the Board could borrow was of any consequence, because, as a matter of fact, if they allowed these people to go to the Home-country with an Act of that House to borrow money, morally they were bound to the persons who advanced money on the strength of the Act of the Legislature. He would like to ask, as a point of order, whether the Bill must not stand referred to the Waste Lands Committee. If that were so, he would ask the honorable member for Mount Ida to withdraw his amendment, and let the Bill go through the ordinary course.

Mr. SPEAKER said he was bound to refer the Bill to the Waste Lands Committee.

Mr. RICHARDSON pointed out that the honorable member for Mount Ida and the honorable member for the Thames had lost sight of the fact that this was a special Act under the general Harbours Act of 1878, which provided that, before any Harbour Board could borrow, authority must be given by the House. That authority being obtained, the bonds issued by the Board must have upon the face of them a statement to the effect that the holder of the debenture had no claim in respect thereof upon the public revenues of New Zealand, or on the Government thereof. That disposed of the objection raised by the two honorable gentlemen who had just spoken. He hoped the House would not refuse to read the Bill a second time, because it sought to carry out a very good object.

Mr. TURNBULL said he would support the second reading: at the same time, he would like to see fuller information and plans laid before the House in the case of this and all similar Bills. That was an important point, which he wished to impress upon the Government. If surveys were made during the recess, and the results laid before the House, members would know what they were voting for.

Colonel TRIMBLE said he felt very much obliged to the honorable member for the Thames

(Sir G. Grey) and the honorable member for Port Chalmers for the way in which they had assisted him in this matter. They knew from personal observation that this was not a mere endowment Bill in the ordinary sense of the term. There was not one acre of this land that could be let for any purpose, and the object of getting these few acres on the banks of the river was to get the whole control in the hands of the Board. At the present time the Government could not sell any land between the street and the river, as it was a shifting quantity, and was always being carried away by the current. The four acres he had referred to was actual river-bed. The surveyor of the town had evidently taken the plan from paper, and not from any observation of the place itself. He might inform those honorable members who did not know the place that in one week in August last the Government landed about 800 tons of material on the river, but the accommodation was so defective that vessels which ought to have discharged their cargoes in forty-eight hours were detained there nearly a fortnight. The consequence no doubt was, that very much higher freights had to be paid, and it was to the interest of the Government itself that these improvements should be gone on with.

Bill read a second time.

SITES FOR WORKING-MEN'S CLUBS BILL.

Sir G. GREY, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said its object was to enable the Government to make grants of Crown lands as sites for working-men's clubs. It merely extended the law which was already in existence, under which the Government could grant sites for similar institutions, but not for working-men's clubs. He therefore asked the House to add the power to make these grants to the power that already existed.

Mr. HALL said the Government would support the Bill, but it would require some amendment. In the first place, it would be desirable to define what was meant by working-men's clubs, as that was rather a vague term. No doubt the honorable gentleman meant the kind of clubs which had been established in the various cities of the colony, and they were institutions they could not do too much for; but it was necessary that the term should be defined, in the interest of the institutions it was intended to benefit. It was very necessary that the land should be vested in trustees, and that they should be restricted from in any way alienating it or improperly dealing with it. With these improvements, the Bill, no doubt, would be a very useful one.

Sir G. GREY would see that, in Committee, every care should be taken that the Bill passed in a perfect state.

Bill read a second time.

DRAMATIC WORKS COPYRIGHT BILL.

Mr. SHEEHAN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, might state that at present, in this colony, if a man stole another's money or goods, he could be sent to prison, but there was no

punishment for the man who stole another's brains. The Bill only proposed to give dramatic authors in the colony the same protection which they had at Home, and to prevent the products of their brains being stolen, or used by other persons without payment.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Government had read the Bill, and thought it deserved the support of the House, as far as they could see.

Bill read a second time.

CHRISTCHURCH DRILL-SHED BILL.

Mr. STEVENS, in moving the second reading of this Bill, explained that the land which was proposed to be dealt with by it formed part of a purchase by the Provincial Government for general purposes. On the particular portion to which the Bill referred a drill-shed was erected for the use of the Volunteers some years ago. It was sought by the Bill to place in the hands of trustees for the use of the Volunteers permanently, the land in question and the building on it. He might state that the building was getting rapidly out of repair, and there did not appear to be any prospect of obtaining funds to restore it or keep it in repair. By giving this land to the Volunteers, the Bill did very much what was done three years ago by the Act that placed the reserve in Dunedin in the hands of trustees for the benefit of the Volunteers, with this slight difference, that the Otago Provincial Council had previously passed an Ordinance reserving the land for the use of the Volunteers. The difference was, however, not material, seeing that the land at Christchurch had been used and a building erected on it for the purpose of furthering the cause of volunteering in Canterbury. The Bill gave power to the trustees to lease a portion of the reserve and to borrow money when required, but it did not give them power to borrow more than to the extent of the rates. They could not part with the fee-simple either by sale or by mortgage. If desired, he would be willing to accept an amendment such as the provision in the Dunedin Drill-shed Act, that, if at any time the number of Volunteers in the portion of Canterbury which would use the reserve should fall below a certain standard, then the reservation for their benefit should cease. There was, however, not much probability of that state of affairs coming about. He proposed to amend clause 2, which placed the trust in the hands of the commanding officer of the district and certain other officers of the force, by making it a continuing body and vesting the reserve in those gentlemen and their successors. That would be a more convenient course, and would prevent the necessity of having a fresh Act passed in case of the resignation or death of any of those officers.

Bill read a second time.

TIMARU WATERWORKS BILL.

Mr. TURNBULL, in moving the second reading of this Bill, pointed out that there were particular circumstances which necessitated it. The Corporation of Timaru had, under the authority of the Municipal Corporations Act, raised a sum of £40,000 for the purpose of obtaining a water

supply for the town. They found, however, that that sum was not sufficient; and there was not power under the Act by which any resolution authorizing the raising of a loan could be rescinded. The matter was one of urgency, and therefore he had brought the Bill in; because the Corporation could not, except by getting the former resolution rescinded, obtain power to raise the further amount necessary to complete the works.

Mr. HALL did not see any objection to the Bill except that it seemed to have been drawn by the folio. The title was four times as long as was necessary, and there was a great deal of unnecessary repetition in other parts.

Mr. STEVENS would like to know whether a poll of the citizens would be taken, so that they might express their opinion as to whether the additional loan authorized by the Bill should be raised.

Mr. TURNBULL.—That is provided for by the 2nd clause.

Mr. W. J. HURST thought that in a case like this, where the Corporation had already obtained power to raise £40,000, and had received a certain portion of it, it would be very hard upon them if they had again to take a poll of the citizens before raising the additional sum required to complete the work. As the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill said there was a provision in it for taking a poll, he would not object, but he thought the House might very well pass the Bill without any such provision. The Corporation had already obtained plant and received advances under the authority of the resolution which had been passed by the citizens, and it was simply because that resolution could not be rescinded that they now came to the House for this additional authority. The Corporation might be placed in a very inconvenient position if they had again to take a poll of the citizens, and did not get authority to increase the loan from £40,000 to £60,000.

Bill read a second time.

NATIVE LAWSUITS BILL.

Mr. McDONALD, in moving the second reading of this Bill, might mention that, of his own knowledge, he was aware that during the last eight or nine years various Governments had promised to bring in measures for the purpose of setting at rest the numberless disputes between Europeans and Maoris respecting titles to Native lands. These disputes existed principally along the East Coast, and during the past few years various attempts had been made to get the difficulties settled by appealing to the Supreme Court, but without any satisfactory result being obtained. The machinery of that Court was found altogether unsuitable for dealing with the peculiar points raised in disputes between Europeans and Maoris affecting titles to land. For that reason he proposed the present measure. In 1868 large tracts of country, notably in Poverty Bay, were, by the consent of the loyal Natives, ceded to the Crown upon the understanding that the lands of those persons who remained loyal would not be interfered with; only the lands of

Mr. Sheehan

the Natives who participated in the rebellion were to be confiscated. In 1869 the Government appointed a Commission of inquiry, consisting of Judges Rogan and Munro, to inquire into the claims of the loyal Natives and ascertain their title to the land. Large and valuable tracts of country were accordingly surveyed, and the owners of the various blocks ascertained. In some cases as many as from one to over one hundred owners were inserted in the Crown grant for one block of land. By this means some of the most valuable land in the country was secured to the loyal Natives under title from the Crown. They held, however, as joint tenants, and not according to the Native custom of tenancy in common. When peace became established, some of the Native grantees gradually began to dispose of their shares in the blocks to Europeans, and in many cases the lands so dealt with were jointly occupied by the European purchasers or leaseholders and the non-sellers in the grant. In other cases the shares of minors in the grants and other grantees were alleged to have been fraudulently obtained. In this way endless disputes arose. The object of the present Bill was to enable Judges of the Supreme Court to be appointed to individualize contested interests, and to absolutely determine according to law and equity matters in dispute between Europeans and Maoris in regard to lands. A Bill similar to this was introduced by the late Attorney-General, Mr. Stout, but there was some disagreement as to who should appoint the Judges. So far as he (Mr. McDonald) was concerned, he did not care whether the Governor or this House appointed the Judges, so long as he could get the land disputes on the East Coast settled. Some time ago, Mr. Arthur, of Poverty Bay, went to that district for the purpose of acquiring land from the Natives. The signatures of about two hundred persons in the memorial of ownership were obtained to his deed of lease, and, at great pecuniary outlay and personal inconvenience, he set to to improve the land. The remaining owners in the block, however, refused to agree to the terms of lease, and accordingly occupied the land jointly with him. The result was, that the non-lessors had driven his stock of five thousand sheep off the land, and that gentleman lost, in consequence, some five or six hundred valuable lambs. Now, as the law at present stood, it was very questionable whether the European, or the Maoris who object to the lease, could obtain any redress. By such a Bill as the one proposed becoming law ample means for both parties would be available for settling disputes of the nature referred to. If this Bill passed the second reading he would be willing to allow of any amendment, so long as it did not destroy the main object contemplated. He would be quite willing that the Government should take up the Bill, as it was a very important measure, especially to the East Coast District.

Mr. BRYCE said there was no doubt this was a Bill of very great importance. It proposed to establish a new Supreme Court, with a new form of procedure; and this Supreme Court would be more supreme in respect to a certain class of

cases than any Court at present in the colony. There could be no doubt whatever of the great importance of the Bill, and they should proceed with great caution in making such a change as was proposed. Nevertheless he did not deny that there might be good occasion for special means being adopted to deal with the cases which the honorable gentleman had described. He thought that a Bill of such importance ought not to be brought in by a private member of the House, but by the Government. He did not pretend to say that the Government had had sufficient time to enable them to give that attention to this Bill which its great importance demanded, and, that being so, the Government were in a difficulty in the matter. They had determined to support the second reading of the Bill, or, at any rate, not to oppose the second reading, upon the distinct understanding that very considerable alteration would most certainly have to be made in the Bill in Committee. And they also reserved to themselves the right, if they thought proper, of discountenancing the passing of the Bill altogether. He did not think it was likely that they would adopt that course: it was more likely that they would propose improvements in Committee. It was just possible that, after more mature consideration than they had yet been able to give to the Bill, they might discountenance the passing of the Bill in its present form. He would point out that the Bill, so far as he had been able to gather, did not prescribe that the new Court should only have jurisdiction within a certain district, but that, on the contrary, it would apply to the whole colony in so far as cases of this class were concerned. He thought it quite possible that the suggestion would be made to the honorable gentleman that it ought to be confined to some special district or districts, and possibly also that it ought to be confined to litigants who desired to avail themselves of the Court. He only threw out these suggestions. At the present moment he was prepared to say that the Government were willing to agree to the second reading of the Bill on the understanding that improvements would be made in it in Committee, and that they reserved the right to make such improvements as they thought necessary.

Captain RUSSELL was glad to hear that the Government would not object to the second reading of the Bill. He agreed most thoroughly with what the Native Minister had said. He thought the honorable member, when he introduced the Bill, did not do justice to it when he led the House to believe that the measure was to apply only to districts on the East Coast. There could be no question that the Bill applied to the whole colony. If the Bill proved efficacious in its working it would affect all parts of the colony. He thought the suggestion of the Native Minister, that the Bill should be permissive in its character, was a question which they might very fairly consider. There were two or three things in the Bill to which he should himself strongly object; but he thought the principle involved in the Bill was good. They should endeavour to bring about a settlement of the litigation which had been going on for the last

seven or eight years. There were many instances of disputes in connection with the purchase of Native lands on the East Coast which should be brought to a termination; and, unless they had some Bill expressly providing a Court for that purpose, litigation was likely to go on for some years to come. He would distinctly guard himself against saying that he should support the Bill as it at present stood. There were various features in the Bill which he spoke against when a similar Bill was introduced by Mr. Rees in 1877. He objected to the clause which provided that the litigants might each appoint an Assessor. That would manifestly be a perversion of justice. In many cases the grantees were two hundred in number, and if the parties to a suit were each allowed to appoint an Assessor with judicial power it would be manifestly unfair, because, on the other side, Europeans would only have the power of appointing one Assessor. These were details which might be considered when the Bill went into Committee. It was clear that there should be some Bill introduced to put a stop to the ruinous litigation that had been going on for a number of years past. On that ground alone he would support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. McDONALD had only a few words to say with regard to the observations of the Native Minister. With respect to the Supreme Court, he might mention that the passing of the measure proposed would be a long way instrumental in saving expense to the colony in matters of litigation over Native titles. It was only the other day that a case had to be brought from Poverty Bay to Wellington to be tried. There were as many as ten or twelve Natives brought down, and five or six Europeans; so that considerable cost had been incurred. With regard to the Bill applying to the whole Island, he was quite willing that it should apply only to the East Coast District, if the desire was that it should be permissive in its operation.

Bill read a second time.

On the question, That the Bill be committed this day week,

Major TE WHEORO intimated that he had something to say with regard to this Bill. He thought it affected the whole colony. He looked upon it as being rather a good Bill; but he was doubtful as to whether it provided for any juries such as Supreme Court juries. He had witnessed proceedings in the Supreme Court where juries had acted unfairly. There was one case in Auckland in which a jury acted very unjustly in a Supreme Court case. A Maori had a law case there concerning a cow; and they disposed of the case in a very summary manner, giving it against the Maori, although he was in the right. He was afraid this Act might include jurors' powers. He would wait until he saw the amendments that might be made in this Bill; then he would offer his opinion. He liked the Bill on account of its raising a question of lands which were in dispute between the Maoris and Europeans at the present time. He thought that, when the Bill was in Committee, a clause should be inserted so as to prevent anything arising like the case in Auckland he had just alluded to.

Captain Russell

Mr. TOMOANA had something to say about the Bill. He approved of this Bill. He would urge upon the members of the House to support it. There were certain things in this Bill which had been long desired by the Maoris concerning their troubles. It would relieve the whole of the Island, which had been crying out against certain grievances. He thought it would be a great boon indeed to the Maori race were it passed. The Maori people would feel very glad, and rejoice at it. If this Bill were passed, nothing detrimental to their interests ought to be put into it. Let it not be like a fish-hook—the bait outside, and the hook inside. Let it only be the bait, so as to lead to the welfare of the people. He was willing that this Bill should go into Committee, because there were several things in it which he approved of heartily. There would be several in the Committee who understood the question thoroughly, and who would have an opportunity of guarding it carefully as it passed. They would then be able to ascertain whether there were not points in it which might be considered in the light of a bait enclosing a hook. If this Bill were passed, it would be a very good thing for the people.

Mr. TAWHAI said he was in favour of this Bill; but it would, he thought, be better if clauses 7 and 8 were altered slightly, because they provided that, if there were two Assessors, one must agree with the Judge, and also, if there were more Assessors, that the majority should agree with the Judge. He would like these clauses carefully considered. He thought that, if the Assessors agreed with the Judge, then that decision should be given. He did not think the law should influence the Assessor in giving his decision as he thought fit. But he thought that, on the whole, this Bill would greatly tend to alleviate their sufferings. More Natives should be included amongst the jurors. They should be able to assist in alleviating the troubles arising through them, as they were a troublesome race. They should try to follow under the laws which had been made for the two races. He agreed with the principal part of the Bill.

LICENSING BILL (No. 2).

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. ANDREWS said he could not help thinking, as in the case of the Bill introduced by the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Acton Adams), that it was altogether out of place for a private member to introduce a measure of this kind. It dealt with a subject which the Government should take into their consideration during the recess, with a view to the preparation of a comprehensive measure. This Bill touched upon two or three portions only of the Licensing Act. It related to petitions, to the granting of new licenses, to the formation of new districts, to compensation, and to a few general provisions; but he might point out that the outcry against the present licensing system—and there was an outcry—was against the licensing districts. The House was aware that to all intents and purposes there was a Local Option Bill in operation at the present time, but it was very

difficult to put the machinery of that Bill in motion on account of the largeness of the districts, and the inability of the people to work those districts satisfactorily. The consequence was that the Bill was inoperative. It seemed to him that the part of this Bill which took that matter up was really the most essential part; but he could not say that he approved of the districts as they were defined in the Bill. Turning to clause 3, it spoke of counties, and said that the word "county" meant a county constituted under the Counties Act. It also spoke of boroughs, road districts, and Road Boards; and, if they looked into the matter carefully, they would find that they might get into a very awkward difficulty; and he would tell the House why. Clause 8 said,—

"From and after the commencement of this Act no new publicans' licenses, except for premises in respect of which a license is held and is in force at the aforesaid time, shall be granted until the ratepayers of the district shall have previously determined, in manner hereinafter provided."

That specially related to ratepayers. Clauses 9 and 11 also related to ratepayers. Clause 14 spoke of the electoral roll, and said that,—

"In districts where no ratepayers' roll is in force, the Clerk of the Licensing Court of the district shall make out a list of all those persons whose names appear on the roll of electors of members of the House of Representatives for the electoral district wherein the licensing district or any part thereof is comprised, in respect of any qualification situate within the district last mentioned."

That clause specially related to electors. And in clause 17 the term "residents" was used. What he wished to point out was, that there were three classes of persons who were entitled to vote—first, the ratepayer, who might not be a resident of the district; next, persons who were on the electoral roll only, which would exclude many residents of the district; and then, if the residents, male and female, came in, there would be a complete mix-up. The Bill would be an extraordinary one, and there was really no necessity for forcing it on, as the present Act was a far better one in this respect. If the honorable gentleman who introduced the Bill had confined himself to improving the districts, he might have made the present Bill a workable and acceptable measure—one which would have served all pressing requirements until a thorough out-and-out Bill for the whole colony was brought forward. If honorable members would look at clause 7, they would see that the whole bearing of the Bill was very unjust. It asked the House to do what he was sure it would never do. It said,—

"From and after the commencement of this Act, a publican's license for any premises that have not been previously licensed shall be granted only at the quarterly licensing meetings to be held in the month of June in each year."

He could not help thinking that that was a great injustice. The Bill set out with a proposal to place the power in the hands of the people, and yet it deprived them of the exercise of that

power for a specified time. It meant that any person, no matter what circumstances might surround him, no matter how anxious the people might be that a license be given, no matter if the district were polled, could only get the license in one month of the year. He thought that was very unfair. Although he had been connected with a body of teetotalers nearly all his life, and although he was aware that there might be some eccentric and unreasonable beings amongst the teetotal bodies, he could not allow it to go abroad that they had not some idea of justice amongst them. Then, clause 8 went on to say,—

"From and after the commencement of this Act, no new publicans' licenses, except for premises in respect of which a license is held and is in force at the aforesaid time, shall be granted until the ratepayers of the district shall have previously determined, in manner hereinafter provided, whether the number of publicans' licenses within the district may or may not be increased."

The 9th clause provided,—

"The Chairman of the Licensing Court of every licensing district wherein a ratepayers' roll, as herein defined, is in force shall, by public advertisement, appoint some convenient day in the month of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty, and thereafter at the same time in every third year, but not earlier than fourteen days after the first publication of the aforesaid advertisement, for taking the aforesaid determination of the ratepayers by a poll to be taken in manner prescribed by 'The Regulation of Local Elections Act, 1876,' which, for this purpose, is hereby incorporated with this Act."

If there was anything unreasonable in the Bill it was this clause, and he was surprised that the House should be asked to pass such a clause. That whole districts should be shut out from getting a publichouse for a period of three years was, if the people indicated by a poll vote that they were willing to have a publichouse, very unfair; while it was equally unfair, on the other side, that, if there was an objectionable house or houses in a district, they could not be got rid of. It was a great objection to the Bill that people in a particular neighbourhood would not have the power of removing an objectionable house—that the Schedule to the Bill only contained these two lines: "I vote that the number of publicans' licenses in the district may be increased;" and "I vote that the number of publicans' licenses in the district may not be increased." If that were the only alternative for the people to decide upon, he could not but think that a great injustice might be done, because the wishes of the people—which he took to be the whole principle of local option—would be often entirely set at naught. He pointed this out, not because he anticipated that this Bill would be passed, but because he wished that the House should express itself so that the Government might perfectly understand what the feelings of the House were, and, when they introduced a new Licensing Act, it would be in the way of meeting the wishes of the House, and be a far more satisfactory one than that now in force. This Bill would not be satisfactory, be-

cause it was unreasonable. Both parties wanted to understand each other, and then the House would be able to agree upon a measure which would be reasonable and fair. There was another matter to which he wished to allude. Clause 5 provided,—

"The licensing districts, for all purposes of the licensing laws, shall henceforth be identical and conterminous respectively with existing and future—

"(1.) Boroughs;

"(2.) Wards of boroughs;

"(3.) Ridings of counties;

"(4.) Road districts outside counties;

"(5.) Such other districts in parts of the colony not comprised within any of the foregoing which the Governor in Council is hereby authorized to constitute, and to vary, abolish, and reconstitute from time to time, as may seem fitting.

"Provided always that the Governor in Council, as he thinks convenient, may group any number of ridings of counties or road districts respectively into one district, and from time to time may subdivide, alter, abolish, and reconstitute such districts."

The great objection to the present Licensing Act was, that the districts were completely unworkable; and he thought that this provision would be but little improvement, if any, upon that now in force. He could not help thinking that no system would be satisfactory which had not for its basis the plan introduced by Sir William Fox to the notice of the House—namely, that all districts should radiate from a centre, the centre being, in all cases, the house for which legislation was sought. If a system of that sort were adopted, it would be acceptable; but the idea contained in this Bill, of introducing the borough and ward system, was most objectionable, and for this reason: Let members imagine a borough divided into quarters. A person might wish to erect a house just inside the corner of one ward and very close to corners of the three other wards: while in one district the house would be in the immediate neighbourhood of three other districts, all of which might be deeply concerned, nevertheless these three districts would have no voice whatever in saying whether the house should or should not be erected, on account of the proposed ward system and the peculiar circumstances connected with its situation. Such a provision would therefore not be satisfactory. He wished to see districts workable; and to be workable they must be reduced from the present size. From what he had suggested, it would be seen that, if this Bill should become law, it would not accomplish the ends which the present Act was intended to secure, and which the mover of the present Bill desired. He was sure the House would give the matter full attention, but he was afraid there was no possibility of passing the matter through this session. There was another matter to which he might refer, and it was a provision in clause 18:—

"Every petition or memorial having reference to the granting, renewal, or removal of a publican's license shall have, in addition to each

signature thereon, a statement of the age, and the actual distance from the premises intended to be affected by such petition or memorial of the residence or property, of each person signing the same."

That was a very difficult provision for any person to satisfy. The trouble, annoyance, and expense of collecting all those particulars would be considerable; but he observed that an amendment was given notice of which would modify the clause. The latter part of the clause was as follows: "The Licensing Court shall, on receiving any such petition or memorial as aforesaid, erase therefrom all names whereto the foregoing particulars are not appended." Then the 19th clause was,—

"The Licensing Court shall, in each case, at their discretion, determine what is to be deemed 'the neighbourhood' for the purpose of this Act, and shall take such measures, by receiving evidence or otherwise, as shall be necessary to determine the number of residents and ratepayers therein."

He took it that that meant that the persons who intended to apply for a license would first have to consider what would be the neighbourhood, and, having arrived at some conclusion, they would take a poll, and then, when the matter was brought before the Licensing Bench, the Court would have to decide who, of those persons who might have polled against the license, should be entitled to have their votes calculated. He could not see how that clause could work nicely. It was a very troublesome point, and he was not prepared to suggest a way out of the difficulty. He believed the simplest way would be to strike out the greater part of the whole Bill, and leave it simply to deal with the definition of districts; but even that provision would require amendment. The next point to which he would allude was that of compensation. He saw, by the Supplementary Order Paper, that it was proposed to strike out clauses 20 and 21; and that left the Bill to deal altogether with new houses, and, if that was so, he did not see that there would be any objection to it. Compensation, no doubt, was one of the most difficult things the House had to deal with, and he could not approve either of the old clause or of the new clause. Clause 21 provided,—

"The compensation to be paid in any case of a license that is abolished as aforesaid shall, at the discretion of the Court, be estimated either—(1.) At the difference made in the value of any premises by the taking away of the license; or (2.) At the difference between the value of the interest of the parties respectively having a beneficial interest (exclusive of the good-will of the business) in the said premises at the time the license is taken away, and the value of such interest respectively after the license has been taken away."

And the new clause read thus:—

"The owner of and every other person having any beneficial interest in any publichouse the license for which shall be taken away or be abolished under the powers conferred in clause seventeen of this Act, shall be entitled to full compensation for all loss of value which he or

they may sustain in the premises, exclusive of the value of the good-will of the business, which shall in no case be taken into consideration in the assessment of compensation; and it shall be the duty of the Licensing Court to cause such compensation to be assessed in such manner as such Court shall direct."

That clause was much worse than the original. He could never vote for a clause to give compensation to every person beneficially interested in a publichouse. In certain cases, he would not oppose compensation. For instance, in the case of a new house, where a person was induced to erect a building for a publichouse in good faith, from certain expressions from the Licensing Bench, and afterwards the people decided there should not be a publichouse, he could understand that there might be some right to compensation; but that new clause, which he had quoted, would open the door to persons who had no show of right to compensation. On the whole, he believed there were a few good suggestions in the Bill, but he preferred allowing the licensing law to stand as it was to passing the Bill; and, he might add, that was the opinion of every person with whom he had been in communication—in fact, he might say, of the whole of the temperance body. They preferred that the present laws should remain as they were until such time as the Government could take up the whole question. Therefore he would vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PYKE would like to point out several defects in the Bill, in case the honorable member succeeded in getting it read a second time, though, with the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews), he hoped the measure would not be allowed to go so far. There were several provisions which showed want of consideration on the part of the framer of the Bill. In defining licensing districts, the 5th clause provided that they should be coterminous with (1) boroughs, and (2) wards of boroughs; but there was no provision made for dealing with boroughs small in extent and limited in population. There were many boroughs, more especially upon the Otago Gold Fields, which were very small. Some boroughs in existence probably did not contain more than two hundred inhabitants, probably not more than forty or fifty of whom would be rate-payers; and, if every ward was a separate licensing district, the thing would be reduced to an absurdity. There should be a provision that, where a borough did not contain more than a certain number of inhabitants, the whole borough should form the licensing district. Then, he wished to say a few words about the Licensing Courts. The present Courts were far less fitted to perform the duties devolving upon them than were the Justices who formerly occupied the position of Licensing Commissioners. It was simply impossible, in small communities, to find a sufficient number of suitable persons not connected with the trade; yet it was one of the conditions precedent that no person connected with the trade should sit, and the consequence was that men got on to the Licensing Bench who were not qualified to sit and deal with such matters

as came before the Licensing Courts. Some means would have to be provided for getting out of the difficulty of finding men who were really competent to sit on the Licensing Bench. Then the proposal in the amended clauses which were to be substituted for sections 20 and 21 would open the door to hundreds of applications for compensation being made. There was no doubt, if those clauses were permitted to pass, and any person having a beneficial interest in a publichouse was entitled to compensation on its being closed, there would be no end of claimants, and the Colonial Treasurer would have to put unknown sums on the estimates every year to meet the possible demands that might be made upon him by publicans who, in order to reduce their numbers without any loss to themselves, would be very glad to get their licenses cancelled, and would themselves take steps to have them taken away. Then there were the local bodies. If their funds were to be interfered with in this way, how were they to carry on their work? This was, after all, nothing but a matter of business. If it did not pay a man to carry on the trade, let him go out of it; and do not let him come to this House for compensation, for he would make a very good thing out of that. He could see that the door would be opened to a great deal of evil if these clauses were agreed to. Then the fees proposed would not bear investigation. What was the amount to be? "Town licenses, £40." That was reducing the fee to be paid in large townships by £10, and it simply meant crushing the people who carried on this business in small towns. Large fees might answer very well in large towns like Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and other places along the coast; but in the small towns up-country it simply meant shutting up these houses altogether. That was simply a piece of cruelty. Again, there were accommodation licenses. What was meant by them he could not exactly see, and it was not explained in the Bill. He supposed what were meant were licenses to be granted to houses at a distance from town—wayside publichouses, in fact, which were a great accommodation to travellers. Ten pounds was a great deal too much to charge those houses as a license fee. Five pounds was quite enough. Many of these houses were most useful, and could not very well be got rid of. The honorable member for Christchurch City very properly drew attention to the feeling of compassion which was got up for persons who built publichouses and failed to get their licenses. That was a thing which was constantly occurring. A man built a house and applied for a license, and was refused; then he applied again, and was again refused; and then a feeling of compassion was got up: "Oh! look at this poor man. See all the expense he has been put to, and yet he cannot get his license." The remedy was very clear and plain. There should be a provision in the Act by which conditional licenses could be granted upon the production of a plan of the intended premises, and great care should be taken that the conditions were strictly carried out before the final license was granted. Let a man go to the Bench and say, "Here is a plan of my house,

showing the bedrooms and sitting-rooms, and bar and stables, and so on. I propose to build according to that plan, and I ask for a conditional license." If he then went on and failed to carry out the conditions, and did not get his license, none of this spurious sympathy and compassion could be got up for him. He would know that if he did not fulfil the conditions he would have no chance of getting a license, and then he could put in no claim for compensation. However, he would not detain the House any longer, and would simply say that, as he was thoroughly opposed to the Bill, he would vote against it.

Mr. DICK thought the honorable member for Christchurch City must have thought himself in peculiar company when he found the honorable member for Dunstan supporting him in his opposition to this Bill.

Mr. PYKE.—Why?

Mr. DICK knew the honorable gentleman did not profess to be leagued with the teetotallers in the colony, and the honorable member for Christchurch City spoke as a leading member of that body. He almost thought the honorable member for Christchurch City must have imagined he (Mr. Andrews) had made some mistake in the remarks he addressed to the House.

Mr. PYKE.—I have been an advocate of a Local Option Bill, in one shape or another, ever since I have been a member of this House.

Mr. DICK was very glad indeed to hear it, because, in that case, the teetotallers had very strong support. He did not speak as a teetotalter himself upon this Bill, but he spoke as one who felt that there was a very great necessity for taking steps to restrict the sale of spirits and wines throughout the country. That feeling had gained strength not only in this country, but in almost every civilized country in the world. A very strong feeling had got abroad in England that there must be restriction somehow, and that local option must be encouraged and supported. A report was laid before the House of Lords lately which showed clearly that the feeling in the country tended that way. He was very glad to see that the honorable member for Cheviot had brought forward a Local Option Bill which would be workable. The existing law did certainly provide to a certain extent for local option, but the districts were so large that the measure was unworkable, and the principal provision of the present Bill was to enable that portion of the existing Act to come into operation. It made local option to a certain extent a reality, and not, as it was at present, a mere sham. He was surprised that the honorable member for Christchurch City should, under these circumstances, desire to throw out the Bill, and let things remain as they were rather than accept a Bill which was not complete. The Bill might not be complete; but it was a step in the right direction, and in that respect it should be encouraged. The honorable member for Christchurch City took exception to a considerable number of the clauses; but those were simply matters of detail which, if the Bill went into Committee, could easily be taken up and considered. For instance, the honorable gentleman pointed out that there was a difficulty

about the ratepayers being the persons who were to have a vote in reference to licensing public-houses. But there was no alternative. You must have the ratepayers, and, in places where there were no ratepayers, you must have the electors. It was impossible to legislate for the same class of people in every circumstance.

Mr. ANDREWS said the present Act provided for residents and not for either ratepayers or electors.

Mr. DICK.—If so, and the honorable member thought "residents" was a better expression than "ratepayers" or "electors," let him substitute that word in Committee. That was quite an insufficient reason for voting against the second reading of the Bill. He was also surprised to hear the honorable gentleman object to the 7th clause. The honorable gentleman being a total abstainer, it might have been expected that he would argue strongly against the use of intoxicating liquors in any shape, because they were injurious to health, and that he would say, "By all means reduce the number of times when people can vote to establish houses in which they could get drunk." Once a year was quite often enough, even in a growing country like this, to give leave to erect publichouses in a district. The next clauses were also objected to by the honorable gentleman on the same ground, that opportunities were not given often enough to parties to apply for licenses. Then, with reference to clause 5, it seemed to him that that clause was very much in the spirit of a Bill which was brought in two sessions ago by a gentleman who was a leading member of the total abstinence body—Mr. Stout. The words were almost a transcript of that gentleman's Bill—except that "wards" was added as well as "boroughs"—which had the support of the total abstainers, and was encouraged by them. The honorable member for Christchurch City must have received some new light, or perhaps he intended to propose in Committee some new way of putting this. If the honorable gentleman then suggested any amendment it could be considered. As to the compensation clause, he was not quite clear as to the way it was put now; but he thought the proposal of the honorable member for Cheviot that nothing should be paid for the good-will was an improvement. He could not agree with the honorable member for Dunstan that under no circumstances should compensation be paid. They all knew that persons put up houses of accommodation—expensive buildings—to suit the requirements of the Licensing Benches. That being so, they had of necessity a claim to a certain extent, but he would not like to say how far. He thought it should be to a very limited extent, because licenses were only from year to year, although there was a tacit understanding that, if the houses were properly conducted, the licenses should be renewed. The honorable member for Christchurch City also objected to clause 18. He agreed with him to a certain extent. There was a proposed improvement, but that improvement did not suit his view. But there was another suggestion, which he thought would meet the difficulty. The promoter of this Bill suggested, in clause 19, that there should be a definition

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made by the Licensing Board, before the time of licensing, as to what a "neighbourhood" was, and that two months' notice should be given of the definition of a neighbourhood. Now, he thought the matter would be made right if the following alteration were made: Instead of "shall have, in addition to each signature thereon, a statement of the age, and the actual distance from the premises intended to be affected by such petition or memorial of the residence or property, of each person signing the same," to insert "shall be signed only by persons residing in the neighbourhood of the house in respect of which a license is sought." The honorable member for Dunstan objected to Licensing Courts. He (Mr. Dick) did not like their constitution, because they might have a good Licensing Court in one district and a bad one in another. In one district gentlemen might be sitting on the bench who supported the views of total abstinents, and refused licenses as far as possible, and in the next district they might find a Court which thought it was well to give licenses to everybody who applied and who had a respectable house. He agreed with the honorable member for Dunstan that Licensing Courts were objectionable, but he would like the honorable member to propose a remedy; for that was the difficulty. As to the proposition of the honorable member for Dunstan in regard to new houses, it seemed to him that it would never do. A conditional license to any one who chose to bring plans would be a great encouragement to the erection of new publichouses, and if such conditional licenses were granted they would take away from the inhabitants the power of deciding that there should be no more publichouses in the district. A person getting a conditional license would have a claim for compensation if it were refused. If this Bill were carried he thought it should be distinctly stated that no house licensed or erected under this new Act should have any claim whatever for compensation. He thought that compensation should only be given to those carrying on business under the existing law. There should be a distinct understanding that houses licensed hereafter should consider that they were licensed only from year to year, and that they must cease and determine without compensation if the ratepayers desired it or the Licensing Bench considered it necessary. The necessity of legislation for the encouragement of local option, giving the neighbourhood of publichouses an opportunity of expressing an opinion as to whether there should be an increase in the number of these houses, seemed to him to be a call which the country now admitted, and which was in the direction of an improvement of the morals of the community.

Mr. OLIVER thought the Bill before the House was well intended; but in all these matters of social reform it would be far better for the reformers to go by small steps, so that they might take the public with them, and educate them up to their views. He could not agree with his colleague, the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick), in his approval of the latter part of this Bill. In the former part, he cordially agreed with him that before any new license was granted

the question of granting or withholding should be submitted to the ratepayers. If the advocates of local option would content themselves with that as an instalment of the larger measure which they desired to obtain, they would carry a majority, not only of the House, but of the community, with them. He would counsel the honorable gentleman, and those who had interested themselves in this very necessary reform, to confine themselves for the present to obtaining that instalment. They could not make a community sober by Act of Parliament. He thought, if those honorable gentlemen would content themselves with going step by step, a little step at a time, they would really sooner arrive at the desired destination than by any other means. This was not a Government question. This Government, like all other Governments which had preceded it for many years, no doubt contained members whose views differed as to the propriety of going the extreme length of local option. For his own part, he recognized the desirability of a reform in their licensing laws, and he thought that, instead of submitting to the rule of Licensing Commissioners, or a Bench of Magistrates, it might become necessary to appoint a Judge who should have jurisdiction over all those matters, and so furnish a tribunal in which the whole community would have confidence. He had no desire to make a speech on this question, but, as he had no doubt that the Bill would be amended in Committee, and the most objectionable clauses struck out, he would have no objection at all to voting for its second reading.

Mr. SPEIGHT said that, like the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick), he did not speak as a total abstainer at all on this Bill. Whatever a man's personal habits might be in regard to intoxicants, he thought they had a duty to perform towards their constituents in this matter. He did not speak as an abstainer, but as a man who, in the interests of the colony, was anxious to get a better licensing law than they had at present; and he thought a majority of the House took the same view, and would act upon the same principle. Matters nowadays had become so simplified with regard to the principle of local option that there was now really no necessity to speak in detail in order to support it, as during the past few years public opinion—not only in this country, but in all other countries speaking their language, and in many not speaking their language—had been so educated upon this point that there was a general concurrence of opinion that all laws made hitherto for the regulation of the liquor traffic had not reached the end designed; but that local option would aid in doing so. The end originally was the prevention of drunkenness, but the laws had not reached that, and the very best of their statesmen found that one of the hardest problems to solve was how to meet that end by means of a licensing law. Therefore he thought it would do no harm, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, if honorable gentlemen from both sides—whatever their political opinions might be, and whatever their private habits might be in regard to intoxicants—gave a general ex-

pression of opinion as to what was the best course to follow in a young colony like this respecting a matter of such vital importance as the sobriety of its people. He thoroughly appreciated and approved the sentiment expressed by the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Oliver). It expressed in other words what had been formerly given expression to by the great Macaulay—that all great reforms were essentially of slow growth; and to this reform he thought the maxim applied. It was not right, reasonable, or proper to expect that a people who had habituated themselves to any article of drink or otherwise, whether as a luxury or as a supposed necessary, could have their habits changed effectually by means of laws alone; but it was quite right to suppose, notwithstanding what the honorable gentleman said about their not being able to make people sober by Act of Parliament, that Parliament could make it easy for the people to follow virtue, and difficult for them to follow vice. Under such circumstances, he thought there was every reason why they should apply themselves, as a Parliament, to speed the people in the path of virtue. The Bill itself had much in it that was deserving of approval, and much that he hoped would become law; but it also contained a deal which he hoped would not become law this session, or in any other session of Parliament. If he were to sum up his ideas shortly of the Bill, he would say that it contained three principles: it contained a principle which provided for the people giving a vote on the granting of licenses to new houses; it contained a principle by which people could vote for the withholding of licenses to old houses; and it contained a principle by which, in cases of licenses withheld, compensation should be paid to persons whose licenses had been refused. He thought the first principle was a correct one—that the people should have the power, not in many years to come, but at once, of distinctly affirming that they would not increase the number of publichouses in any given district. The sooner that power was given to them under the Statute law, the better it would be for the colony. Regarding compensation, he would say that, if it was proposed that they should as a young colony introduce into their Statute Book the principle of compensation—a principle which he made bold to state had not been approved of by any country that had had any experience in this matter, and a principle which would never be approved of by any country that dealt properly with the people who paid the taxes—apart altogether from the point of view that compensation was wrong in theory, which could be very easily and satisfactorily proved, to propose to take the public funds of the colony for such a purpose was an improper thing, the end of which they did not altogether see, and the injurious effects of which they did not know. He would refer to the provisions of the Bill. The interpretation clauses were very good as far as they went. He thought, also, with regard to clause 5, giving the definition of the licensing districts, they were getting an instalment of that which they wanted. The honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews) thought clause 5

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was faulty, because it made the boroughs, wards of boroughs, ridings of counties, and road districts outside of counties licensing districts—that they did not take a circle radiating from a centre, that centre being the house for which the license was applied for. He would not say that he disagreed with the honorable gentleman, but he would say this: that if they meant to do any good, and put on the Statute Book things that they desired to see carried out, they must take what they could get, and go further afterwards in the same direction. It appeared to him that the definition of the districts in the 5th clause was something gained which they had not had up to the present. Hitherto large licensing districts were marked out, much to the inconvenience of the people who took any interest in the prevention of the establishment of publichouses. This Bill provided that the licensing districts should be coterminous with districts existing for other objects. They thereby got rid of a great difficulty—the difficulty of getting the districts well defined. Then the still greater difficulty which hitherto existed, of taking the votes of the inhabitants, was provided for in a fairly approximate manner by the Bill. Formerly the onus was thrown upon the people of canvassing for votes in the district, and of paying the cost of preventing further licenses being granted. They had to go to considerable difficulty and trouble in canvassing districts which were so enormous in extent that it took a fortnight, three weeks, or even a month, to canvass them. What was their reward? Frequently they had to go before the Licensing Bench, and, although they proved conclusively that the great majority of the people of the district were opposed to the granting of licenses, yet the licenses had been granted. What did that arise from? It arose from two things: first, from the constitution of the Bench itself, and, secondly, from the difficulty of providing proper machinery for carrying out the will of the people. These two things were met to some extent in this measure, particularly the latter. With regard to the constitution of the Licensing Benches, however faulty they might be—and undoubtedly they were very faulty as at present constituted—those faults would become less apparent in proportion as the people were allowed to exercise their own votes on the subject. The matter would be then left less to the discretion of the Licensing Bench, and to that extent the evil would be reduced. To show the very peculiar position of some of these districts, and the composition of the Licensing Benches, he would give one case in point. In a certain district, a license was applied for at the meeting in June, 1878, and refused, in consequence of the receipt of a petition signed by about three-fourths of the adult inhabitants of the district. The petitioners, however, undertook to provide the necessary accommodation for travellers. At the September meeting the application was renewed, and, although a similar petition was presented, and the petitioners proved that they had provided the accommodation as agreed, the license was granted on the casting vote of the Commissioner, who took the chair without being voted to

it, as there was no regular Chairman. The Chairman was supported by the vote of a Maori, introduced under the Outlying Districts Sale of Spirits Act. The said Maori resides about sixty miles from the publichouse, and has no interest in the district whatever. None of the evidence was interpreted to him, and consequently he could know nothing of the merits of the case. The other two Commissioners opposed the license, but were overruled by the Maori and the Chairman's casting vote. The Chairman, previous to this, had been employed some months fitting the hotel; also, after the license was granted, he continued to work at the building for about nine months. Under these circumstances, he was totally unfit to occupy a place on the Licensing Bench. His (Mr. Speight's) informant wrote, "I trust you will use your influence to obtain redress. These statements can be verified on application to the other Commissioners; and numerous witnesses can testify that the Chairman is employed a considerable portion of his time in the house for which he assisted to obtain a license." The license was granted in opposition to the will of the people. Under such a system as was proposed in this Bill, that could not have occurred. If there was protection guaranteed to the residents of districts by the Government in the matter of issuing licenses, such things would not be done by the Licensing Benches. Where such a thing as that happened, it was to be the duty of the Government to inquire into it, and remove from the Licensing Bench the person who could have committed such an act. The man who, on his own motion, constituted himself Chairman of the Licensing Bench and had set at defiance the will of the majority of the people, had actually been employed for nine months previously in getting the house ready for the license, and after the license was granted he was still further employed in the house. No comment was needed upon that fact. The name of the place and the persons referred to could be had when challenged. He did not refer to this in order to get an inquiry into a particular case. There were cases all over the country equally bad, or nearly so. The fault lay in the fact that the licensing system was in itself bad, the mode of issuing licenses was bad, and the composition of the Licensing Benches was bad. They could not possibly make matters worse than they were now. He disagreed with the honorable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Andrews) that they should allow the existing Act to remain as it stood, and bring in a comprehensive measure. He considered that any change made in the right direction should be made as quickly as possible. There were evils arising from day to day in connection with the liquor traffic, and they must be stamped out. If the will of the people was to be exercised upon applications for licenses, the sooner that will was permitted to be exercised the better, and more comprehensive measures dealt with when they came in. He now came to the 7th clause, which one honorable gentleman had taken exception to on the ground that it was wrong to shut out persons from having a house opened for the sale of liquors during twelve months.

The honorable gentleman, however, forgot this fact, that this provision only applied to the granting of new licenses. If a license were refused upon the vote of the people—say, at the June meeting—was it reasonable or right that the same trouble which had been gone through at that meeting, in order to keep the house closed, should be gone through three months afterwards? The least the persons who had canvassed the district could expect would be that the house should not be opened for twelve months. He thought the honorable member for Christchurch City would see the reasonableness of that, when he looked a little more closely into it. He was aware that the honorable gentleman had gone into the subject very closely, had paid great attention to it, and was as sincerely desirous of doing the right thing in this matter as any honorable member of this House; but he thought the honorable gentleman had not given to this particular clause the consideration which it deserved. Then, with regard to the taking of the poll every three years, some persons thought such an interval too long. Was it right that, after a locality had once gone to the expense of taking a poll, it should have to incur that outlay every three months? It would be a very serious matter to do so. It was only reasonable that, when a vote was taken that a house should not be opened in a district, the vote should stand for three years, unless very good reasons were shown for a decision to the contrary, such as the springing-up of a new township, or something of that sort, which was provided for in the proposed measure. Was it not reasonable to suppose that, when once the people had taken up such a position, it would take, under ordinary circumstances, three years before they changed their minds? His proposal with regard to the Bill was this: that it should stop at clause 16, thereby making the Bill apply solely to applications for new licenses. He was aware that, in proposing this, he might be looked upon as endeavouring to spoil something in clause 17, which related to the shutting-up of old houses. They did not want clause 17, as it was already in the existing Act. Under the present Act they had the power to close up old houses without compensation, which was better still. He would submit to the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill that he should rest satisfied with the Bill up to clause 16, until a comprehensive measure was brought down by the Government—that he should trust to that measure to remedy all the other matters complained of. If the Bill did nothing more than give them the means of working the clauses relating to the prevention of the opening of new houses in districts, it would do everything that they could expect at the present time. He did not mean to say that it would do everything that was required by those of them who were looked upon as *ultra* men on the subject of temperance reform; but he would say this: that no legislation they could make should be in advance of the public sentiment, and that, if it were found that the House would not adopt a Bill which would give all that this Bill gave without tacking on a compensation clause, it was better, in the interests of the

country and in the interests of temperance reform, that they should sacrifice what they could not get without admitting a compensation clause, rather than that they should accept it with such an obnoxious clause attached to the Bill. If the honorable gentleman would stop at clause 16, he would have done remarkably well, and he would give him every assistance in carrying the Bill through. He believed the House would pass the Bill in that form; but if he would not consent to strike out all the clauses from 16 to 22 inclusive, he should feel bound most reluctantly to oppose the passing of the Bill, because, however much good they got out of the earlier portions of the Bill, that good was more than counterbalanced by the compensation clauses, which committed the country to an expenditure which it ought not to be subjected to, and to a principle which was inherently wrong. Unless these clauses were struck out, he would oppose the Bill at every stage. Apart altogether from the objection to compensation as a principle, there was an arrangement proposed in clause 22 which was very objectionable indeed:—

“Two-thirds of the amount of compensation to be paid in any case under this Act shall be paid by the Colonial Treasurer, on the request of the Chairman of the Licensing Court, to the persons respectively entitled thereto, and one-third of the amount of such compensation shall, on a similar request, be paid to such persons out of the funds of the local body which receives the licensing fees accruing in the district wherein the claim for compensation has arisen.”

It was only a recent Statute or Act of that Assembly—recent by a few years—which had given to the local bodies the license fees at all, so that by this clause they would be called upon to pay a portion of the cost of shutting those houses up—houses which were opened without any consultation with them, or acquiescence on their part. On the other hand, two-thirds of the cost of shutting up those houses had to be paid out of the revenue of the colony. He thought the power which created any interest in any trade should be the power which should pay to take that interest away. In other words, a general Statute of the colony gave these people a right to open these houses: therefore, if compensation was to be given at all for shutting up these houses, it ought to be given entirely out of the funds of the colony. Otherwise, it would be making the local bodies pay for the closing-up of houses to the opening of which they were no parties. Another objectionable feature was that, so surely as they made a body of ratepayers pay out of their funds for any action they might take which was detrimental to those houses, that moment they were adducing the greatest reason why they should not take action, because they had to pay for it. If they closed up those houses, it would require a certain amount of taxation to be levied to pay the contribution demanded from local bodies, and at the first blush this was the most common-place argument that would present itself to a body of ratepayers against taking action for which they would have to pay. Probably a limited number would see there

would be an ultimate benefit which would more than compensate for the amount of money they would have to raise in the meantime; but the appearance of the matter to a large majority of the ratepayers would be this: that if they closed these houses they would have to pay the money; therefore they would not close them. They were putting local bodies in a false position, and the ratepayers in a position in which there was something to deter them from carrying the principles of local option into operation. He thought that in Committee certain small alterations should take place which would have the effect of rendering the remaining clauses after clause 22 much more acceptable. Personally, he had little feeling as to whether license fees in towns should be £40, £20, or £25. The stand he took was that, so long as the Government of the colony—whether local or general—endeavoured to draw the means for its own sustenance out of the vices of the people, so long was there a wrong state of things existing; but if it was to be that license fees were to be drawn, and that local bodies were to draw them, then he thought, in the interests of the locality, in the interests of the people, and in the interests of the publicans themselves, it would not do to cut these fees down to a very low figure. He thought that, if they took the opinion of the publicans themselves, they would not be in favour of low license fees. He was aware that in some localities they would go in for low fees; but in many of those places it would be found that the houses were mainly owned by one man or by a company, and that it was that man's desire to have the right of keeping as many houses as possible open, into which he could put his tenants at will, and thus it was frequently seen in some cities that twenty or thirty houses were held by one man, the brewer; and his drayman, his porter, or other servant was put in and put out as occasion required it. They were constantly changing their tenants, because the houses were the property of certain great brewers or wholesale merchants, who were anxious to dispose of the material they sold, and could only do so with advantage by keeping these houses. This class of persons would like to see low license fees levied; but the genuine publican, who went into a house with the intention of establishing what he considered a respectable kind of trade, would never object to a decent license fee being put upon him. He thought he was stating the opinion of the trade in this matter. He did not profess to be an advocate of the trade, but he took this to be their opinion, as expressed by themselves and by their organs. They declared that they could keep a better class of house, and could prevent persons with small capital coming in and establishing inferior houses, if the license fees were not reduced to too low a figure. This was a theory which had much to commend it from their point of view. Personally, he did not care one penny-piece whether the license fees were high or low, except as regarded the question of local revenue, and of limiting the number of licensed houses. There were a number of minor points which would no doubt be mentioned in Committee. He would conclude by telling the honor-

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able member who had charge of the Bill that, if he would agree to abandon all clauses from 17 to 22 inclusive, then he thought they might turn out of Committee a Bill that would be of immense service to the people, inasmuch as it would provide them with the means of carrying into operation the principle of local option, which had been put on the Statute Book by the exertions of two gentlemen who were no longer members of that House, aided and backed up by gentlemen who were members of the present Parliament, and by the general good sense of the people of this country, who believed in the principle of local option pure and simple, without the obnoxious provision for compensation being attached to it.

Mr. SHRIMSKI said it was his intention to oppose the second reading of this Bill, not because he was not as great an advocate of the principle of local option as any man in the colony; but he could not agree with the views laid down in the Bill as to compensation. According to this Bill, two-thirds of the compensation was to be paid out of the colonial revenue, and he, for one, would like to know how the colony, in its present position, was to pay two-thirds of the compensation for loss of licenses. And the other third was to be paid by local bodies. As one who had held office in several of these minor bodies, he was convinced that they were not in a position to pay this one-third. He knew that there were houses valued at £20,000, and he should like to know where the money was to come from to pay £20,000 compensation.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Special loan.

Mr. SHRIMSKI could not, for the life of him, understand why this compensation provision had been inserted. Why had the publicans a right to expect that the colony should be called upon to pay compensation to them for loss of license? The Union Steamboat Company had been in the habit of receiving certain subsidies for conveyance of mails, and all at once the Legislature thought fit and proper to construct railways, thereby taking away their trade and subsidies. Had the Union Company received any compensation? Why should they? At one time various parts of the colony were traversed by what were called Cobb's coaches. These coaches had since been removed from the scene. Had they received any compensation? Certainly not. And he could not see why publicans should be specially compensated. The honorable member, no doubt, had good intentions in trying to do good to the public by removing the sale of intoxicating liquors to a great extent; but he had made a great error in his Bill, for, instead of preventing, he was granting licenses for several parts of the colony in which they had not hitherto existed. One of the most objectionable features of the whole Licensing Act was the bottle license; and they should prevent that as much as possible, because it was an inducement to those who were ashamed to go into a publichouse. Females, for instance, went into grocers' shops and got their bottles of grog, which were put down to their husbands as groceries. This not only injured themselves, but injured their families, and they became a burden on society, filling the gaols, lunatic asylums, and bene-

volent institutions. Yet the honorable member for Cheviot actually put a bottle license in his Bill. In some parts of the colony—in Canterbury and Otago, he believed—some such thing was in existence, but in Wellington and Auckland he believed this was not the case. The honorable member desired to establish one of the most pernicious principles that could possibly exist, by establishing more bottle licenses than hitherto existed. He failed to see the object the honorable gentleman had in view. He must have brought forward the Bill in order to satisfy some of his constituents and not with any intention of carrying it. He (Mr. Shrimski) had had many conversations with Licensing Commissioners on the subject, who all agreed in the opinion, which one of them expressed in a letter, that the only way to stop the excessive sale of drink was to give the Bench power to inflict a penalty which should not be subject to appeal. At present, if the Bench inflicted a fine of £10 on the sly grog-sellers, they did not object to pay that small amount, and if the fine amounted to £30 or £50 there was an appeal against the decision of the Bench. Objections were taken by the solicitors, and the judgment of the Court was often overruled. He had a great desire to see some measure passed by which the people would be protected from those who trafficked in spirituous liquors; but he could not see that this Bill would achieve that object, or that it was even intended to do so, and therefore he would not support the second reading.

Mr. SEDDON intended to support the second reading of this Bill, and would briefly give his reasons. As the honorable member for Auckland City East had stated, there were three principles contained in the measure. The first was with regard to granting licenses to old houses. In this was involved the whole question of the present licensing system—or systems, because there were so many of them. On that point he would say that, instead of adopting the compensation clause contained in this Bill, it would be better to provide that the old houses for which licenses were granted should have certain accommodation, or otherwise that applications should be refused. If that were done the effect would be to close up houses which were at present merely bare, and the country would be saved the necessity for paying compensation. If they closed up a house that had accommodation of a superior kind, which had been agreed to by the Licensing Bench, they would be doing an injustice to the proprietor. Let them apply the argument to any other business, and attempt to shut up a butcher's or a tailor's shop on the ground that there were already too many such shops, and would not the owner complain that the liberty of the subject was being interfered with? The Crown in such a case would be bound to pay compensation for any loss that was sustained. If the principle of taking away licenses was affirmed by the House, then the compensation clause would be a fair one to adopt; but he did not see that it would be necessary. And if it were decided by the Legislature that the residents of a locality should have the power to close a house on the conditions he had mentioned, then the Crown alone

should pay the compensation. Why, in some of the boroughs the shutting-up of one public-house alone would mean the taking-away of the entire revenue of that borough for twelve months. Such being the case, the Parliament ought not to give power to close such houses except on condition that the Crown took the responsibility of paying the whole of the compensation money. Feeling quite satisfied they would not do that, he felt that there was an end to the compensation clause altogether. With regard to houses in course of construction, he thought it would be necessary to insert some provision in the Bill to meet those cases. He believed it was the custom in many places for the Licensing Bench first of all to require that the plans of the house should be submitted to them, and to agree to grant a license on condition that the approved plans were carried out. In such cases, in regard to which there was no provision in the present Bill, the Legislature should place the houses in the same position as though the license had actually been granted by the Bench, and not allow them to be brought under the local-option provisions contained in the Bill. With regard to new houses—and here occurred the great principle, and the one about which the temperance advocates were most concerned—he thought it was quite proper that they should place in the hands of the people the right of saying what number of publichouses there should be in any particular locality. The principle had been successfully adopted in Victoria, and he was prepared to support a measure having the same object in view. On no occasion had the people, when intrusted with discretionary powers, abused that discretion. They were allowed the privilege of returning members to Parliament, and in very few instances did the electors make a mistake. Such being the case, he was quite prepared to place in the hands of the people the power of saying whether there should be any new publichouses in their districts. But he thought that the House would be going quite far enough if it simply affirmed the principle of local option. The whole licensing system required to be dealt with in a manner in which this Bill did not attempt to deal with it. In fact, for years past legislation, not only on this, but on other social subjects, had been altogether neglected. They found that the old licensing laws of the provinces still remained in force in the different provincial districts. In Otago there were twenty-four or twenty-five different Acts on this subject, and in Westland the law was different from that which existed in the neighbouring District of Nelson. The same thing occurred, he believed, throughout the length and breadth of the colony. Now, he would suggest that the House should affirm the principle of local option as applied to new houses, and that the Government should then bring in a comprehensive measure, dealing with the whole question of the liquor traffic. There was not one word said in this Bill about the repeal of any provisions at present in force, although many such provisions would virtually be repealed; and there were many other matters that required to be provided for. He was rather surprised that,

Mr. Seddon

while a penalty was to be imposed upon publicans for not using lamps, or for selling grog on the Sabbath, no punishment at all was provided for the publican who sold bad grog. He believed that most of the injurious effects which resulted from the liquor traffic were owing to the absence of any regulation regarding the quality of the liquor sold. To this cause were no doubt attributable many of the cases of lunacy which occurred in the colony. He trusted the House would affirm the principle laid down in the Bill, that the people should have the right to say whether new houses should be licensed or not. They should go no further than that, but simply leave it to the Government to bring down a comprehensive measure repealing the existing licensing law, and consolidating the legislation dealing with this question. That was the opinion he held; and he would vote for the second reading of this Bill on that ground, and on that ground alone.

Mr. PITT did not propose to address the House at that late hour, although this was a very important matter, and one which might very well engage the serious attention of the House. The Minister for Public Works had said that this was not a Government measure. Although it had been introduced by a private member, still he (Mr. Pitt) was of opinion that the subject with which it dealt was one that ought to be taken in hand by the Government; and he trusted that the result of the debate which had occurred that evening, and of a previous debate on a similar Bill, would be, that a comprehensive measure would be introduced by the Government during next session. With regard to the Bill before the House, he would be very glad to vote for the second reading, because he heartily approved of the principle of local option which was contained in it; and he did not intend to criticise closely the provisions of the Bill, although there were some of which he disapproved. He thought that the Good Templars and other temperance bodies who had been active on this local option question were beginning to take a temperate view of the matter, and that they would be satisfied if the action of such a measure as this were restricted to new houses. The other principle in the Bill was that of compensation. This question was surrounded with such great difficulty that he thought the mover of the Bill would do well to accept the suggestion of the honorable member for Auckland City East, and strike out the clauses under that head altogether. If the Bill were only to apply to new licenses, then there was no necessity for the compensation clauses. There was ample provision under the existing law for closing disorderly houses, and he believed that the Licensing Courts would not be slow to close houses that were badly conducted, and that, so long as those already licensed were properly carried on, the proprietors would have nothing to fear either from the temperance bodies or from the residents in the districts. He hoped that clauses from 8 to 16 would be altered in Committee, and that the persons entitled to object would not be the ratepayers, but the residents of the district. He thought that all males and females of twenty-one years of age and upwards

were entitled to have a voice in deciding whether any new houses should be opened in their district or not. An honorable gentleman near him said he objected to females, but he (Mr. Pitt) would tell the honorable gentleman at once that in his opinion females should be recognized in the Electoral Bill which was before the House, and he would be quite prepared to support any motion for extending the franchise to that section of the community. If no one else made such a motion, he would be quite prepared to do so himself. He certainly thought that the matter should be decided by the residents and not by the rate-payers. Then, if the compensation principle was to be retained, he would suggest that it should take this shape: that, instead of the compensation being paid in money, notice should be given to the owners of existing houses that at the end of five years their houses should come under the operation of this Bill. The difficulty of ascertaining the amount to be paid would be so great that no satisfactory settlement would be arrived at. As to the constitution of the Licensing Bench, the Minister for Public Works said he thought there ought to be a Judge of the Court. He was sorry the honorable gentleman did not elaborate that point a little more, because without further explanation it seemed to him that such a proposal would lead to insuperable difficulty. Who was to be the Judge? Was he to be a Supreme-Court Judge, a District-Court Judge, or a special Judge? It would be impossible to have a Supreme-Court Judge, as there would have to be a Judge in each licensing district. If he was to be a District-Court Judge, that would not help matters further, because the District-Court Judge was frequently the Resident Magistrate of the town or district, and the Licensing Commissioner too. The practical effect of such a proposal would be to reduce the Licensing Bench to one. His own idea was, that the number of Commissioners should be increased, and they might with advantage try the experiment of making them elective by the persons who voted in the election of members of this House. He certainly thought the constitution of the Licensing Bench required amendment. He trusted the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill would accept the suggestion of the honorable member for Auckland City East in regard to clause 16, and that he would retain the provisions with reference to Sunday trading. The Bill would require considerable amendment in Committee. It contained no reference to the bottle license and accommodation licenses, but if honorable members were in earnest about it the Bill might be made sufficiently acceptable to serve till next session, and then he hoped the Government would come down with a comprehensive measure which would meet with the approval of the country at large. The subject was one which was well worthy of the consideration of the Government. He thought the country was much indebted to the Good Templars for the efforts they had made in the cause of temperance, for unquestionably their exertions had been the means of reducing the number of inmates in the lunatic asylums, and he believed that in the next generation the good

they had done would be more apparent than it was at present.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE said that, as this was a Bill of very considerable importance, he would like to place his opinions on record in regard to it. He had always supported the principle of local option since he had been in the House, and he should do so again on this occasion. He considered that the people who were to be affected by the granting of licenses should have a voice in deciding whether those licenses should be granted or not, and, generally, he approved of the Bill, but he did not approve of the compensation clauses. He had not approved of the compensation clauses in the Bill introduced last year, neither did he believe in those in this Bill. It appeared to him to be presumption in the House to think that any Local Option Bill was going to close any respectable publichouse; and, if it was only going to close those which were a disgrace, why grant compensation to them? That would be a sort of premium to crime, and encouragement to people who were a disgrace to the community in which they lived. He approved of the scale of charges for licenses in different parts of the colony, which it was intended to introduce into the Bill—persons in country districts should pay less for licenses than those who resided in the towns; and he would suggest that it should be the aim of the Good Templars to prevent the sale of adulterated liquors, as well as to endeavour to suppress the sale of liquor altogether. He was perfectly persuaded in his own mind that no legislation would prevent persons indulging in a too free use of liquor, but he thought something might be done to prevent adulteration. It was well known that the liquor dispensed in some of the back parts of the country was simply poison, and it would be a great boon to the country at large if some officer were appointed to analyze the spirits sold, and if provision were made to punish those who sold adulterated spirits. The cry all over the country was, "Can't something be done to supply us with good liquor?" It would do some good to the country if steps were taken to secure that end. The honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt) said there was ample provision under the existing law for closing disorderly houses. He should like to ask the honorable gentleman if he ever knew of a disorderly house being closed. He had known houses of a notoriously bad character to be kept open for years by men who were no credit to the colony, and yet, if a man went to the Licensing Bench with his thirty pieces of gold, they gave him a license, although they knew perfectly well that he had been breaking the law year after year. It appeared to him that the Licensing Bench was not constituted as it ought to be. Its members looked too much to the fact that the granting of the licenses conferred certain monetary benefits on the district; they did not look at the moral effect that would be gained by not granting them. Then there was the question of selling liquors to persons who were intoxicated. It was a well-known fact that many publicans in the backwoods, if he might use the term, lived to a great extent on persons who came down with cheques for £30

or £40, which they gave to the landlord, and told him to stop their credit as soon as that was done. If anything could be done to stop these lunatics from conducting themselves in this way a great benefit would be conferred on society. He would like to see a clause inserted in the Bill inflicting a penalty upon any person from whose house a drunken man was seen to come, it being left to him to prove that he did not sell the drink. The mistake in the present law was that the onus was upon the police to show that a drunken man got his drink at a particular house. He should vote for the second reading because it was a step in the right direction. He was led to do so because he believed the honorable gentleman who introduced it had the good of the cause at heart. He was sorry the temperance members of the House disagreed upon the measure, because he thought they might have met together and drawn up a Bill amongst them which would have given complete satisfaction.

Mr. FULTON did not wish the discussion upon such an important Bill to close without saying a word in regard to it. He generally indorsed the opinions of the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt). If the honorable member who introduced the Bill had confined himself to dealing with new licenses, a step would have been gained, and they would have before them something upon which they could agree; but the discussion that had taken place showed how widely it was possible to differ, even though they all had the public interests at heart—so much so that some gentlemen who were total abstainers were going to vote in one lobby while other total abstainers went into the other. He agreed with the honorable member for Auckland City East that it was no use to legislate far in advance of public opinion. The people must be educated upon this question as upon all others, and they were gradually beginning to understand the value of abstinence from intoxicating liquors. As an old resident in the colony, he felt satisfied that this was the case, and that there was substantially less drunkenness in the colony in proportion to population than there was some years ago. He could not agree with what had fallen from the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt) with regard to the constitution of the Licensing Bench; and he spoke with some knowledge on the subject, having had considerable experience. He had been connected with Licensing Courts for twenty years, and had been a Licensing Commissioner not only for Dunedin, but also for a number of districts outside that city. The honorable member thought that it would be an advantage to increase the number of Licensing Commissioners. Well, that was contrary to his (Mr. Fulton's) experience. Before the present system was brought into operation it was the law that all Justices of the Peace residing within the district might take their places upon the bench. What was the result? As a rule, only a few gentlemen, who took a deep interest in the matter, occupied seats upon the bench when questions as to granting licenses came up for discussion. But there were cases in which a man, who knew his license—perhaps an objectionable man to hold a license—

would very likely not be again granted, had gone round the city and procured the assistance of Justices, gentlemen not in the habit of dealing with these matters, and taking no interest in them, but who, because they were willing to favour this person, had come and taken their seats and swamped the decisions of those who took a deep interest in the matter. As was no doubt well known to the House, the Licensing Court consisted of four persons, and there must be three present to form a quorum, so that there was some fixity in the determinations of the Bench; but under the old system there was no guarantee that a license refused at one meeting would not be granted at the next quarterly meeting, the magistrates in each case having exactly the same evidence before them. He thought the new system had worked well; the appointments had been judicious, and there was an improvement in the mode of administering the law: therefore he disagreed with the opinion that the number of Licensing Commissioners should be increased. There was another matter the honorable member for Nelson City had referred to, and that was that there should be some compensation given to persons who were holders of licenses—compensation not given in the shape of money, but in the shape of time. He thought, as the honorable member suggested, that, if any such measure as the present were passed, notice should be given that all licenses after a certain time would come within the provisions of this Act. That would practically solve the whole difficulty. He was not so unreasonable as to suppose their drinking customs would absolutely cease. The well-conducted houses would continue to receive their licenses, and those badly conducted would lose theirs. Further, he must say it would be well if all these matters were left to be dealt with by a Bill brought in by the Government, dealing with the subject in a comprehensive manner, and not taking it up piecemeal, as was done in this Bill. He was very much afraid, if the Bill passed its second reading and went into Committee, it would then be so changed that when it came out again the honorable gentleman would hardly know it. While saying that the whole matter deserved the attention of the Government and the House, he was prepared to vote for the second reading of the Bill. The honorable member for Motueka had referred to the question of punishing publicans for supplying drunkards with liquor. He (Mr. Fulton) thought the proper course would be this: that notice should be given by the police, to all landlords in the district, of any person who had been convicted of habitual drunkenness; and a penalty should attach to any landlord supplying that man with liquor. He thought some such provision would meet the case.

Mr. J. T. FISHER would support the second reading of the Bill, although there was much in it that he did not agree with, and though he thought, with the last speaker, that when the Bill came out of Committee the mover would not know it. He really thought it would be better for the honorable member to accept a promise from the Government that a measure should be brought in dealing with the whole matter in a

general way. But he would support the second reading, because he thought the districts were too large, and hoped that some amendment in that respect might be made in the present law.

Mr. MASTERS said he was anxious to see some moderate measure of reform which would give the people a voice with regard to the system of granting licenses; and while, to his mind, there were many defects in the present Bill, in the hope that those defects would be remedied in Committee he should vote for the second reading.

Mr. HUTCHISON thought the honorable member for Cheviot had met with a scant measure of justice, because the production of a measure like this reflected great credit upon the honorable member; and it was all very well to talk about a comprehensive measure, but if they waited for that they would have to wait a long time before anything was done. On the principle that half a loaf was better than no bread, he would support the Bill, which contained a great many suggestions that would work very well. It was based upon lines which all moderate men would recognize as lines upon which such a measure should be based. He thought it might be well to introduce into a tentative measure such as this one of those schemes or experiments which were reported to have met with success upon the Continent of Europe. Mr. Chamberlain, one of the members of Parliament for Birmingham, gave a good deal of information about one particular experiment known as the Gothenburg system; and he (Mr. Hutchison) did not see why Corporations or the Government should not make an attempt in that direction. The testimony of the gentleman referred to, who, by the way, had visited the place where this system was in operation, was strongly in favour of the system. The Government, at any rate, would have no interest in selling bad liquors, or in selling liquor to encourage drunkenness, which unfortunately was the case with the licensees of publichouses, more or less, throughout the country. He thought if the honorable member could possibly introduce such a provision into the measure it might be included with success. He simply rose to say that he thought it was rather discouraging to a member of the House, when he devoted his time and attention to a measure of this sort, and endeavoured to deal with a matter bearing upon the social condition of the people as this measure did, to find there was scarcely any one to say a good word in favour of it. It was a very easy thing to find fault. Nothing came more readily than fault-finding and criticism. It was much easier to find fault than to frame such a measure as this. He should support the second reading, and should assist the honorable gentleman to pass the Bill into law.

Mr. STEWART said, when the House undertook to legislate upon the sale of liquor it ought to take into consideration the question of sly grog-selling, because this was a cause of annoyance and injury throughout the colony to an extent which probably very few members of the House knew anything about. He had been told by publicans that the amount of sly grog-selling that went on—in large centres of population especially, and in some of the country districts—was very

great, and publicans desired that some salutary measure should be passed whereby sly grog-selling should, as much as possible, be put a stop to. Further, the liquor sold by the publicans ought to be subject to inspection, and some revenue officer or officers be appointed for the purpose of seeing that the publicans sold nothing but liquor of a good quality. He thought the publicans were fairly entitled to protection at the hands of the Legislature in the way he had indicated. With regard to the provisions of this Bill, he took up this position: that, as regards existing licensees, he could not disregard the fact that these licensees had a vested right—that they had expended large sums of money and had devoted much attention to creating a business which was recognized by the State and which they were encouraged to carry on. Therefore it seemed to him unfair if through any sudden change in public opinion these persons should have their property sacrificed. He therefore thought that these provisions enabling parties, so to speak, to disfranchise licensees should not apply to existing licensees, although he had no objection to their application in the case of new licensees. The question of compensation was no doubt one of very considerable difficulty, both as to the mode of adjustment of it and as to the source from which it should be paid. He would be disposed to support a system whereby the local authority should pay the compensation. It was unreasonable to say that two-thirds of the compensation should be paid out of the general revenue of the colony, when it was made payable by the voice of persons who considered it to their interest to withdraw the license from an hotel. The persons who wished such a reform should be prepared to stand the consequences, and should not throw upon the rest of the colony the liability which would be entailed by their act. He would have very much preferred if one comprehensive measure had been brought in by the Government, dealing with the whole licensing laws of the colony. Of course the present Government could not be expected to undertake that matter during the present session, and it might be worth considering whether it would not be better for the honorable member for Cheviot to withdraw this Bill upon the understanding that the Government would consider the whole question, and bring in a comprehensive measure next session, which should be previously circulated throughout the colony in order to ascertain what was the state of public opinion upon it. As far as he was aware, the publicans did not object to this measure as it stood at present, whereas they might object if the compensation provisions were withdrawn or so altered as to make them nugatory. He would not object to the second reading, but he would not consent to any provision affecting existing licensees unless there was compensation.

Mr. SAUNDERS, in reply, said that one very satisfactory feature in connection with the introduction of this Bill, and the debate which had taken place upon it, was the very general expression of opinion from all sides that it was a question with which the Government should deal in a comprehensive manner. He felt certain the

universal expression of opinion by the House on the subject would insure that the Government would give the matter their attention during the recess, and would feel it their duty to bring forward a measure dealing with the whole question of the licensing laws, and repealing all existing Statutes, as one of their first measures next session. He trusted, in doing so, they would have it put in print sufficiently early to enable the country generally to express an opinion upon the matter—a matter which the utterances at the last elections showed was of great interest to the people at large, and one that would certainly affect the happiness of the many far more than other Bills that were so much talked of. He had been pleased with all the remarks made upon the Bill, with, perhaps, one exception. He was sorry to hear the first speaker that evening express the opinions he gave utterance to—he was very sorry to hear one who professed to be friendly to total abstinence and temperance express such opinions as the honorable gentleman did with regard to his Bill. He might say that he would have felt much more regret if that honorable gentleman had shown that he had sufficiently considered the subject to be able to give the House a valuable opinion upon it; but in the remarks the honorable gentleman made he showed that he had either not read the Bill and the proposed amendments, or, having read them, had failed to understand them.

Mr. ANDREWS.—I had not read the amendments. I had no opportunity of reading them.

Mr. SAUNDERS was sorry, then, that the honorable member should have said that amendments which he had not read were a great deal worse than the original provisions. However, he would take it for granted that, when the honorable gentleman had had time to give the matter due consideration, he might possibly alter his opinion with reference to the desirableness of magistrates granting licenses for three years, and with regard to the power, under any circumstances, of only granting them once a year. The honorable member for Christchurch City said those provisions were grossly unfair, unjust, ill-considered, and ridiculous. If those observations had been made with regard to clauses which he (Mr. Saunders) had himself introduced for the first time, he would perhaps have felt it necessary to say something in reply to them; but as the provisions to which the honorable gentleman objected had received the approval of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Stout, and Sir William Fox, he felt that, in the absence of support from so great a luminary as the honorable member for Christchurch City, it was quite possible for those provisions to stand upon their own merits. With regard to the next speaker, the honorable member for Dunstan, he might say that he agreed with nearly all that honorable gentleman said upon the subject. He thought, with the honorable gentleman, that the present Licensing Court was an objectionable Court; but he did not by any means acknowledge that any substitute suggested during the debate would be an improvement. He did not at all agree with the honorable gentleman that the Justices of the

Peace would form as good a Court as the present one. There was a great objection to the present Licensing Court, for this reason: that it called upon residents in a district to sit, and act, and confer as a judicial Court upon questions nearly affecting their neighbours, and upon which they could not decide without a considerable amount of reluctance—knowing that the men with regard to whom they were adjudicating were men from whom, probably, they had received or might receive a great deal of assistance and accommodation. He had heard many men complain that the publichouses whose licenses they were called upon to grant or refuse were to a certain extent houses of accommodation, parcel-and-delivery houses, and places where they got their labourers, their shearers, and the various hands they required during the season. Under those circumstances they found it very awkward to place themselves in antagonism to their neighbours, and therefore did not carry out the law as strictly as they might otherwise have done. It might, then, be well, perhaps, to appoint a sort of travelling commission, so that they could sit upon cases and consider them as they thought right, and not as to the effect upon the persons making the applications. He thought that what the honorable member for Dunstan said with regard to granting conditional licenses on plans was also well worthy of consideration, and had often been recommended. In any comprehensive measure the House should endeavour above all things to encourage rather the erection of large and expensive houses than mere beer-shops. It was only reasonable that those persons who contemplated going to a large outlay for the purpose of getting a license to sell these intoxicating drinks should have an opportunity, before they incurred that expenditure, of knowing whether the Commissioners or judicial Court sitting in judgment over the matter considered that a house of a certain character was desirable, and would receive a license; so that he thought the honorable member for Dunstan had only expressed a very general feeling throughout the country, and one which he trusted the Government would bear in mind in any measure they introduced. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick), in the very friendly remarks he made upon the Bill, expressed his opinion that there ought to be no compensation for houses erected after the Bill came into force. That was an opinion he had heard expressed by many persons entertaining similar views to his own, and there was a great deal in it. But he thought there was this objection: that it would have a tendency to discourage the erection of a superior description of houses. If the Legislature wished to have houses of a superior class erected, it was necessary that the persons erecting them should understand that their licenses would not be taken away from them lightly, and that they would have some compensation in case of the license being taken away without any fault of their own. He agreed with the remarks of the other honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Oliver) with regard to the necessity for moving slowly and cautiously in all matters of this kind, and being

Mr. Saunders

thankful for small mercies. He would be glad to take the honorable gentleman's advice, and he hoped he had not proposed anything rash in this Bill; but, if he had gone too far in any direction, he would be only too glad, with the honorable gentleman's assistance, to retrace his steps, and take a proper path. The next speaker was the honorable member for Auckland City East (Mr. Speight), who spoke strongly against any compensation. When he (Mr. Saunders) introduced the Bill, he said the great feature in it which he thoroughly valued was the power to refuse new licenses. He did not place much value upon any power of dealing with old licenses, and he did not think that any provisions he had proposed would often be put into operation in regard to those old licenses: there would be very few, at all events, that would be interfered with by these provisions. If it was the wish of the House, he would consent to give up the idea of compensation, if, at the same time, all power of dealing with old licenses was taken away. His sense of justice in the matter would not allow him to accept the casting out of the compensation clause and at the same time the retaining of the power to deal with old houses; but, if the House desired not to deal with old licenses, and to confine the Bill to new houses, he was quite willing to accept that feature, and exclude from the measure all the compensation clauses, and the power of dealing with old licenses in any way whatever. The honorable member for Auckland City East told them that the whole of the compensation, if paid at all, should be paid out of the general revenue. That was his own view at first, and for many reasons. He would very much prefer to see that course taken; but a gentleman of a great deal of experience, and whose opinion he valued very much, pointed out that the objection in that case would be that there would be nothing to prevent a district coming frequently to the House for compensation for the same house. They might take the license away one time and grant it another, and as often as the license was taken away more compensation would have to be paid. If the district had to incur a certain amount of expense and responsibility, it would be a guarantee against such cases occurring. He would not notice the remarks of the honorable member for Waitaki (Mr. Shrimski). That honorable gentleman was so exceedingly ingenious in finding bad motives for any action he (Mr. Saunders) took in the House, that he did not think it was at all necessary to notice the remarks the honorable member had made upon the motives that had influenced him to bring in this Bill. The honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) complained that there was no repeal provision. Perhaps he had overlooked the fact that the 2nd clause repealed all provisions that might not be in accordance with this Bill. He was much pleased with the speech of the honorable member for Nelson City (Mr. Pitt). He was glad to find that he would have so much able help as he would get from that honorable member in carrying out his views, and in amending the Bill as might be required in Committee. At the time he introduced the Bill

he said that, with so many lawyers in the House, he did not believe it would pass in a defective shape for want of legal assistance, and he believed he agreed with everything in regard to principle that the honorable member for Nelson City had said. The honorable member for Motueka had asked why they should compensate those who broke the law. This Bill did not propose in any way to compensate those who broke the law. He trusted that those who did not conduct their houses in a satisfactory manner, and did not comply strictly with the law, would have their licenses removed by the machinery at present existing, without any compensation whatever; and he believed that one good effect of the introduction of the local-option principle would be to make magistrates more strict in enforcing the law than they had hitherto been. It was far from his intention to see compensation introduced in such cases. It was only where houses were well-conducted, and where they were stopped by the will of the people under circumstances which the holders had no reason to anticipate at the time they took the licenses and incurred their outlay, that he would propose compensation. He did not think he need say much with regard to the suggestion of the honorable member for Motueka as to the adulteration of liquor. It seemed a widely-spread popular error that it was the special duty of teetotallers to prevent the adulteration of drink, in which they were not interested. There were some members of the House who believed with himself that all intoxicating liquor was what the honorable gentleman called "simply poison." He believed that the highest authorities agreed that alcohol was one of the strongest poisons, and he did not think it would be possible for a publican to adulterate liquor with anything very much worse than alcohol; but there were perhaps many poisons to which some persons were not so accustomed as they were to alcohol. He entirely agreed with those honorable members who said that the Licensing Commissioners were very objectionable; but they were in every respect a very great improvement on Justices of the Peace. He had seen many instances in which Justices of the Peace had been imported to the Bench by interested parties for the purpose of getting a license granted, and he thought that was an exceedingly objectionable power to place in anybody's hands. The honorable member for Wellington City (Mr. Hutchison) in the friendly remarks he made upon the Bill, had alluded to the Gothenburg system. Having regard to the high authority with which that system came recommended to them, he thought it was one that might properly occupy their serious attention. He would be glad indeed to see a fair trial made of that system. They had a great deal to expect from it, and it would also have the recommendation that it could be put into force probably without any expense, and possibly with a considerable amount of profit to the colony. Certainly, if the sale of drink were placed in the hands of those who had no interest in or profit to derive from excessive facilities for obtaining liquor, they might expect a great improvement in the temperance of the people at

large. He would be very glad to see that system carried out, and whoever might attempt to do it would have his hearty assistance. He thanked the House for the friendly manner in which it had received the Bill. He felt sure they would not refuse to go into Committee, and, when there, he would be glad to obey the decision of the House on all questions, provided they left him what he considered the one important principle in the Bill—namely, power for the people at large to refuse an increase of those licenses throughout the colony.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 30th October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Reading—Colonial Industries—Legislative Council—Lunatic Asylums—Habitual Drunkards Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Gaming and Lotteries Bill, Fisheries Preservation Bill, Intercolonial Probate Bill.

SECOND READING.

Administration Bill.

COLONIAL INDUSTRIES.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, Whether the Government purpose introducing any measure to afford protection to colonial industries?

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER said the matter was deserving very serious consideration. The whole question of the finances of the country was now under the consideration of the Government, and this particular question of giving protection to local industries was being dealt with by a Select Committee of the House of Representatives. He could therefore not give any answer to the question at present. When the Financial Statement was made the views of the Government would be fully set forth.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, Whether the Government intend to bring in any Bill proposing to alter the constitution of the Legislative Council?

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER replied that the Government did not propose to make any change in the Constitution of the country.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

The Hon. Captain FRASER, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that about seven years ago Dr. Paley, Inspector-General of Lunatic Asylums in Victoria, was requested to visit and report upon the lunatic asylums of New Zealand. He did so; and the main recommenda-

tion in his report was as to the appointment of medical superintendents. Nothing, however, was done. In those days lunatic asylums were under the control of the Provincial Governments; and, as they were optimists, they would make no change. A few years ago Dr. Skae had been appointed Inspector of Lunatic Asylums in the colony, and his reports showed that he entirely agreed with the recommendation of Dr. Paley. Three years ago he advised that that course should be taken; but nothing had been done in the matter, and these institutions had from year to year so deteriorated that they had become a foul blot upon our civilization. In the last report he had the honor to make as Honorary Inspector of the Dunedin Lunatic Asylum, he was able to boast that there was no mechanical force used in that asylum; but Dr. Skae said,—

“Restraint by means of strong canvas dresses without sleeves is being used in the case of four exceptionally dangerous or suicidal patients. No one was found in seclusion; but owing to the present circumstances of the Asylum it is found absolutely necessary to resort to seclusion very frequently, chiefly for short periods, in the treatment of several exceedingly violent and dangerous patients in the male department.”

He (Captain Fraser) had visited the best-conducted asylums in England. No mechanical force was used; no seclusion was necessary. All the patients mixed together with their fellows. With regard to the treatment of patients in the Asylum, he might read the following:—

“This Asylum was next visited on the 25th January, and again on the 30th May, and 2nd and 5th June. At this last inspection the attention of the Superintendent was directed to the fact that the clothing of the patients was not warm enough for the time of the year, as they were not supplied with flannels. It is obvious that, if strong healthy attendants, engaged in active occupations, find it necessary for their comfort to wear these, lunatics, whose circulation is enfeebled by their disease, and who lounge about in airing-courts, must require them still more. It is unreasonable to suppose that the absence of complaints on the part of the patients, and of any manifest indications of injury, such as colds, &c., is proof that they are suffering no harm from insufficient clothing. The mortality was unusually great last year.”

The mortality was twenty-six. The report proceeded, “and one can hardly doubt that it was affected by the severity of the winter weather, even though none of the deaths could be directly ascribed to it.” Dr. Skae saw that some of these patients were suffering from consumption; and, on inquiring from the Superintendent how it was that they were not sufficiently clad, that gentleman said he was not aware that they were ill, and that they had made no complaints. He need not tell honorable gentlemen that in the first stage of consumption very little pain accompanied the disease. But if there had been a medical superintendent he would have seen from the hectic day flushes and from the night sweats that the disease was committing its ravages, and, instead of these unfortunate consumptive patients being seen with

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blue lips and shivering limbs, scantily clad, exposed to the inclemency of a Dunedin winter, they would have had warm dresses and flannels, and been kept in a heated room. But the fact was, that these non-professional Superintendents had practically the entire charge and control over the health of the insane, even to the giving of narcotics occasionally. He was free to confess that if the medical gentleman who now paid diurnal visits to the institution never went there at all the patients would be neither better nor worse. In Dunedin the Superintendent and the medical officer got £700 a year between them, and it was the same in Christchurch. Now, what he proposed was to send Home for experts. He had made inquiries when at Home, and had ascertained—and this Dr. Skae had since corroborated—that a first-class man who had been brought up for many years in one of the modern lunatic asylums in England could be obtained at a salary of £600 a year. There might, no doubt, be some honorable gentlemen present who had not studied the question of insanity, and they would naturally say, “Why send out of the country for medical men? Have you not plenty in New Zealand?” But, although every medical man was supposed to have made an exhaustive study of the bodily ills which afflict frail humanity, he need not say that as physiologists their study ended there, and it was where their study ended that the psychologist took up the work; and it was only by years of study in a first-class asylum and by observing and watching the different phases of the mind—that which one of the first psychologists and one of the best and most noble of the Romans called the *animula, vagula, blandula, hospes comesque corporis*—that thing which for a short time inhabited and made a companion of our bodies—it was only by studying its various phases that proper curative theories could be established. To show the difference between a physiologist and a psychologist he would quote the following from Dr. Skae:—

“The high rate of recovery in the asylums of this colony, as compared with that of asylums at Home, is to a slight extent explained by the fact that many discharged patients are returned as recovered who certainly would not be considered to be recovered in the sense in which that word is used by the medical officers of English asylums. One instance which happened this year will serve to illustrate this: that of a patient who was examined by three medical men and discharged as recovered, one of the doctors certifying that he was not insane, and that ‘the only subject on which he could be suspected of insanity was a delusion that his wife was the Holy Virgin, Elias, daughter of the Empress of Russia.’”

He need not say that that delusion might at any moment have acquired a dangerous tendency, and that the patient might have become either a homicidal or a suicidal lunatic. With the permission of the Council, he intended to make a slight alteration in his motion. He had been informed by the best authority in the colony that Dr. Manning, of New South Wales, had brought the Lunatic Asylum there up to the level of the Home standard, and that it was quite possible

they might get experts from that colony. He therefore proposed to insert, after the word “England,” the words “or a neighbouring colony.” He had been requested to include the Wellington Asylum in the motion. Before doing so, having read Dr. Skae’s report, which he could hardly credit, although fully admitting the reliability of the authority, he made it his business to visit the Asylum, which he did on the previous day. He would shock the sensibilities of honorable gentlemen by reading Dr. Skae’s report:—

“The numbers now in the Asylum are—males, 66; females, 46; total, 112; being 40 more than when I first drew attention to its overcrowded condition. This has now reached a pitch which is quite unendurable, and baffles all attempts at good management. Almost all the bedrooms, intended for the use of one patient only, are occupied by two or three. There is consequently no possibility of safely disposing of excited and violent patients; and the risk of serious accidents, even murders, is very great indeed, not to speak of the abominable vices which are liable to be encouraged by such distribution of persons of disordered passions and bereft of self-control. The passages and lavatories are used as sleeping places. Most of the associated dormitories are crowded with beds, to which less than half the minimum cubic space thought consistent with good health is allotted. The solitary day-room of the male ‘back ward’ is even more crowded than the dormitories. This room is 20 feet by 15 feet, and, when visited on the 29th instant, a rainy day, on which the patients could not get out to the grounds, it contained thirty patients, packed so closely together on benches that they had not room to move their elbows. Although three windows and the door were open, the atmosphere was close and offensive; but the Superintendent explained it was nothing to what it usually was in wet weather, when it is occupied by thirty-five patients and two attendants, and the windows have to be kept shut on account of the strong, cold winds. It is absurd to pretend that this place, in its present condition, has any claim to be considered ‘an asylum;’ it would be an undeserved compliment to call it ‘a prison.’ It is not morally justifiable to continue week after week adding to the numbers of its inmates. Whatever difficulty there may be in otherwise disposing of the insane, it appears to me necessary that a circular should be sent to all Resident Magistrates and acting Justices in the provincial district, informing them that no more patients can be received into the Asylum until the building has been enlarged, or a reduction has by some means been effected in the number now resident. Unless some such step as this be taken, it seems certain that some dreadful catastrophe will happen. It cannot be too distinctly stated that this Asylum is already in a dangerous and unmanageable condition.”

He indorsed every single word of that report. The Superintendent of the institution, who seemed to be a very good man, told him that he had reported to the Government that he would not hold himself responsible for anything that might occur; that a murder might take place

at any day, and that it was with the greatest difficulty that he could induce the warders to remain, for they were always in a state of dread. There were fifty women in a space which was originally intended for twenty-five, and the consequence was, that they were highly exasperated and in a state of excitement from overcrowding. The very lavatories, store-rooms, and outhouses had all been turned into dormitories, and there was not a single place where these unfortunate people could put their clothes. He found the linen in the only bath-room; and in wet weather the patients were obliged to hang their clothes in their sitting-rooms. There were now very nearly a thousand lunatics in the colony; the increase this year would be nearly a hundred, and the amount required for the increased accommodation would probably be £100,000. He had not touched upon this part of the subject, because he had good reason to believe that a sum would be placed upon the estimates towards providing the requisite accommodation. But it was a very serious matter that they had allowed this state of things to go on. Under the present system it was impossible to carry out any curative treatment; and unless they obtained experts from Home—men who had made insanity their study for years and years of their lives, and who were acquainted with all the modern improvements which had been adopted in the best asylums in England—unless they did this the evil would become a perfect canker in the State, increasing year by year, people being discharged from the asylums without being cured, and having to go back again into confinement. He might say that his motion had the sympathy of the present enlightened Minister of Justice, and he had been promised the support of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Dr. Menzies, and the Hon. Dr. Grace. He was sure that what he had said would appeal to the feelings of every one present, and that the motion would be carried unanimously. If it was so carried, there was no doubt that the Government would at once see the necessity of taking steps to procure the services of experts from New South Wales, or of communicating with the Agent-General with the view of obtaining competent persons from England. In all probability this would be the last time that he would have an opportunity of raising his voice on behalf of these unfortunate people, who could not speak for themselves. They were not roads, bridges, or railways; they had no vote, and had no one to speak for them or care for them; and, if he succeeded in doing some good for them, it would be a great satisfaction to him. He begged to move the motion standing in his name.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER would ask the honorable member if he would alter his motion by striking out the words "from England," so that they might see first what could be done with regard to other places, especially New South Wales; and, if unsuccessful there, they might then send to England. If the motion were amended in this way, he would not oppose it.

The Hon. Captain FRASER would be quite willing to adopt the suggestion of the honorable gentleman.

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The Hon. Mr. MENZIES, in seconding the motion, must express his great gratification at the remarks of the honorable gentleman, for they would lead his hearers to hope that some measures would be taken by the present Government to abate the dreadful state of affairs which was disclosed in the report of the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums. No one could read that report without feeling shocked that the most helpless class in the whole community had been so far neglected as to be treated a great deal worse than we should treat our beasts of burden. He would not dwell upon the details which had been so fully explained by the Hon. Captain Fraser, in corroboration of the matters disclosed in the report of Dr. Skae. But, while he trusted that that Assembly would be so far impressed with the necessity for making proper provision for this class of unfortunates that one of the earliest votes in another place would be towards providing sufficient accommodation for them, he held that, even with the additional accommodation, something more was requisite in order to give them a chance of being restored to health and to their families. It was well that the Government should take into consideration the recommendation of some of the highest authorities upon this question; and they found that one of those authorities—perhaps the highest, Dr. Conolly—pointed out in the *British and Foreign Medical Review* that the success of treatment in a curative asylum depended very greatly upon the arrangements in that asylum—that a great deal of the success likely to result from the seclusion of the insane patients in an asylum would depend upon the manner in which the architect had constructed the building. The same writer also proceeded to point out that, however well the building might be contrived, very much of the success of the treatment would depend upon its being under the direction of a medical superintendent. He also pointed out that a comparative return showed that the number of cures in a variety of hospitals bore a direct ratio to the fact of the superintendents being medical men; and in this he was borne out by a report made to the Imperial Government on the colonial hospitals and asylums, and circulated through the colonies some years ago. In this report it was shown that, taking a group of asylums—notably those in the West Indies, which were under very different systems of management—in those which were under the direct management of resident medical chiefs the proportion of cures was much greater than in those in which the superintendent was a non-professional person. The tribute which Dr. Skae paid to Mr. Hume for his management of the asylum in Dunedin was, he believed, very well deserved; but then Mr. Hume was one among hundreds, and his special aptitude for the treatment of the unfortunates under his care must not be taken as a criterion of the success usually attending the management of non-professional persons. With reference to this point he might refer to what the report he had just named said on the subject. [Extracts read.] He thought no one would dispute the value of the

information given by Dr. Conolly. He was glad to learn, from the remarks of the Hon. Captain Fraser, that there was a prospect that some of our asylums at least would be placed under the control of medical men; but he would suggest to his honorable friend whether it would not be well to include in his motion the name of another place as well as the three mentioned. It appeared from the report that the numbers confined in the different asylums stood in this way: Dunedin, 253; Christchurch, 236; Wellington, 117; Auckland, 196. If it was desirable to have a resident medical man in charge where the number of patients was 117, he felt that it was still more desirable that there should be such an officer in an establishment where there were 196 patients. He was gratified to find another paragraph in Dr. Skae's report. Speaking of the new buildings designed at Seacliff, near Dunedin, he said,—

"There can be no doubt that the possession of five hundred acres of good land will greatly reduce the cost of the patients' maintenance, and, by affording them the means of abundant, cheerful, and healthy employment, tend to promote the cure of those who are curable, and greatly to increase the comfort and happiness of them all. It will also, in future, be possible, with so large an extent of land, to provide increased accommodation of a comparatively cheap and simple kind, by means of cottages placed here and there for the use of harmless and industrious patients, who, as a rule, much prefer the more natural and homely life they are thus permitted to lead to dwelling in a vast asylum."

That, he thought, gave the key-note to an alteration which he hoped to see introduced in the treatment of our lunatics. Those who were familiar with the subject would know very well that the system under which the largest number of cures had been effected was that which had been in operation in Belgium for generations. In connection with a large central establishment, the small farmers in a district called Ghisl received insane patients who were not dangerous to themselves or to others, and sometimes they even received patients of a worse description. They had been accustomed from childhood to have such people living with them, and they had acquired a marvellous aptitude in the treatment of them. The patients who were fit to be sent out from the central institution were boarded at those farms, and the proportion of cures was very large indeed compared with the results in other establishments. Now, it was possible that that system might be introduced into New Zealand. Seeing that it had been so successful in Belgium, it might deserve consideration whether, when they had the means provided for further accommodation, it might not be well to bring out to the colony a few families from the district he had mentioned, in order to begin the system which had been found so successful there. He thought he had touched upon the different points which had been raised by the Hon. Captain Fraser, and he once more expressed his gratification that the wants of these helpless individuals were attracting the attention of the Government.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That,

considering the number of patients at present in the Lunatic Asylums of Canterbury, Otago, and Wellington, this Council is of opinion that the Government should take the necessary steps for securing the services of three properly-qualified medical practitioners from a neighbouring colony, for the purpose of filling the situations of medical superintendents of the Lunatic Asylums of Canterbury, Otago, and Wellington."—(*Hon. Captain Fraser.*)

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY thought the thanks of the Council were due to the Hon. Captain Fraser for bringing this subject forward. But he did not think the honorable gentleman went far enough. The mere appointment of medical superintendents for the lunatic asylums would not improve the condition of the inmates very much. It was necessary to go very much further than that. Up to the time when the provinces were abolished, the Provincial Governments looked after these institutions, and there was no doubt that, although they were not perfect, still several of those bodies did the best they could to keep the asylums in the best possible condition. With respect to the one in Christchurch, he might say that, many years ago, the Provincial Council decided to have a medical superintendent; but there was some vested interest, he thought, in the way, and, although the Council carried the resolution by a large majority, nothing had been done towards carrying it out up to the present time. When the provinces were abolished, of course the management of these institutions became entirely a matter pertaining to the General Government. He would ask any one who had looked through the reports of Dr. Skae, commencing in 1877 and going on through 1878 and 1879, what the General Government had done towards improving these institutions or keeping them up. They had done nothing at all. If honorable members looked at the report of 1877, at the report of 1878, and at the report of 1879, they would find the same complaint running through the whole of them. He (Mr. G. Buckley) not only blamed the late Government, but also the preceding Government. They were both deserving of the severest censure, not only of the Legislature, but of the whole colony, for the neglect they had shown of these institutions. He wished to propose an addition to this resolution, to the effect that the attention of the Government should be called to the reports of Dr. Skae, because he thought that the mere appointment of medical superintendents would only leave the matter where it was before. Any one who read the Inspector's reports must be satisfied not only that the present condition of our lunatic asylums was a disgrace to the Government and to the colony, but that the Legislature should protest against any Government being allowed to neglect those institutions any longer. The addition which he would propose to the resolution was as follows: "and that the reports of the Inspector, Dr. Skae, recommending alterations and additions for the improvement of the various lunatic asylums of the colony, should receive the immediate and serious consideration of the Government."

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE must demur to the censure which the last speaker, and the honorable gentleman who had introduced the motion, had been pleased to pass upon the administration of lunatic asylums by the late Government, and he would show that there was no reason for making the contrast between the conduct of the General Government and that of the late Provincial Governments which had been made by the honorable gentlemen. He would speak from facts, because, with the exception of Hokitika, he had inspected every asylum in the colony. He had seen, with the greatest regret, that the asylums were overcrowded; and he could bear out everything that Dr. Skae had said. But why was it so? Was it because the number of lunatics had suddenly increased? Was it because the General Government had neglected the matter? No: because the Government, speaking for that of which he had had the honor to belong, had spent the very last pound they could ask Parliament to give for the purpose of erecting suitable buildings. No; the fact was that, in spite of everything the Government could do, they had not been able to overtake the deficiencies of years. The honorable gentleman came from a part of the country where insufficient accommodation existed; but he must know that everything possible to be done under the circumstances had been done to provide for the comfort and proper treatment of the lunatics, with this exception, that there was no medical officer, properly speaking, resident at the asylum, and he (Colonel Whitmore) entirely went with the honorable gentleman in what he said in that respect. He regretted to say that up to the present time there had been uniform opposition throughout the colony to the idea of properly-trained medical officers—men capable of dealing scientifically with lunacy—being brought from Home and appointed to the various asylums, and therefore it had been considered hopeless to introduce such a proposition to Parliament. The appointment of Dr. Skae himself would certainly have been rejected in another place had it not appeared that an agreement had been entered into, before the matter was brought before Parliament, under which he was engaged for three years. In the face of such a feeling as that, and in the face of the fact that the money to enable the Government to afford the necessary accommodation for lunatics was always grudgingly given by Parliament, how could the Government be expected suddenly to go the whole length of proposing to Parliament to import specially-trained medical officers to attend the lunatics? The first want, undoubtedly, was increased accommodation; and, in spite of all the honorable gentleman had said, he (Colonel Whitmore) contended that the late Government had done the utmost in their power to supply that want. This very report showed that, in regard to the paragraph which the honorable gentleman had read out and animadverted so strongly upon, there had been improvements effected. Dr. Skae said, "Since this time last year additional accommodation for male patients has been provided by the erection of a new wing for fifty." That showed that at

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the time of writing that part of the report to which the honorable gentleman had referred, which was dated the 25th and 29th December, the action taken had cured this state of things. What had been done in Wellington had been done elsewhere. The honorable gentleman must know that at Dunedin a large new asylum was being built, and one was in course of construction at Auckland, of considerable dimensions and substantial in material. A second wing for the male portion of the Christchurch Asylum would have been proceeded with before now but for the circumstance that it was found impossible to get a contract within, or in any degree approaching, the estimate. For some reason which he did not understand, at the time it was proposed to proceed with this building all tenders for Christchurch work were at least 30 per cent. above the estimates, and above anything that had ever been paid for similar services previously. Mr. Macandrew had shown him that the tenders were out of all reason, and when that gentleman was in Christchurch he endeavoured to discover the cause, but failed. He made inquiries of all the best-informed persons, consulting the Chairman of the Lyttelton Harbour Board, among others, and the officers of the department; but no explanation could be obtained. No person could satisfactorily account for the great increase, while all admitted that the tenders were abnormally high. Therefore it was judged best to come to a compromise, by which only a portion of the work was gone on with. At Nelson and Hokitika, two places where the Provincial Governments appeared to have done their duty completely, and provided buildings not only sufficient for the time they had control, but for the immediate future, very little had been done by the General Government, but nothing was required to be done. They were not crowded, and both from Dr. Skae's report and from his own observation he had come to the conclusion that very little improvement was required. He claimed that this was a matter in which neither the Government nor its predecessor could be blamed; or, at any rate, the Legislature must accept blame in equal proportions. When a Legislature was unwilling to vote money for lunatic asylums—when a Legislature viewed with so much jealousy all expenditure on lunatic asylums that it would have absolutely discharged the Inspector from the service of the country by refusing to vote his salary had it not appeared that he had been engaged for a period of three years—it must be content to accept some share of the blame which devolved upon the Government in consequence of the condition of the lunatic asylums.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, no.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said that honorable gentlemen might say "No;" but nevertheless that was his (Colonel Whitmore's) opinion.

The Hon. Mr. G. BUCKLEY.—The Parliament has always voted everything it has been asked for.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE inquired whether the honorable gentleman imagined that a Government did not know, without putting sums

on the estimates, whether the House would vote those sums. Did the honorable gentleman believe that any Government would put sums on the estimates when they knew they were not likely to succeed? But he would tell the honorable gentleman—and every one who knew anything of the subject would tell him the same—that the sums spent on lunatic asylums during the last three or four years had been considerable—of that he might, if he chose, satisfy himself by looking up the estimates—and these sums had been rigorously applied in the best direction. They had been spent under the advice of the proper officer, Dr. Skae; and the condition of the lunatics, though far from what he (Colonel Whitmore) might wish it to be, still was as good as it possibly could be with the means at the disposal of the Government. It was, after all, a question of room and accommodation, and not a question of treatment. The working of the system under Dr. Skae for curing lunatics had been all that the accommodation would enable it to be. In Wellington, had there been an alternative, he would have condemned the whole building, and built another asylum somewhere in the country. The present was a most improper site. It was highly disapproved of by Dr. Skae; and nothing but the immediate necessities of the case led him to decide that, after all, the proper plan to meet the present pressure was to put up a wooden wing so as to increase the accommodation for the time. But such provisions were only stop-gaps. It was only by such a motion as that now before the Council that the attention of Parliament could be forcibly drawn to the positively disgraceful state of the lunatic asylums of the colony. There was, as the Hon. Captain Fraser said, immense sympathy with roads, and bridges, and harbours, or anything which would further the interests of certain sections of the community; but, when it came to a question of the kind now before the House, there was an indisposition, formerly by the local Legislatures, and now by the General Assembly, to face the thing to a proper extent. He did not say that honorable members had not always relieved their consciences by voting something to meet pressing requirements here and there; but the arrears were not to be overtaken by that means. The country must be prepared to spend a great deal more than it had shown any inclination to do in the past. Dr. Skae, last year, had made suggestions for which it was estimated £300,000 would require to be expended in giving the necessary accommodation; but he (Colonel Whitmore) would like to know what probability there was of having £300,000 voted all at once. Honorable gentlemen would, perhaps, forgive him for saying there had been no anxiety on the part of the General Assembly to alleviate the condition of the lunatic asylums. When these institutions were handed over to the colony by the provinces, they were a long way behind the requirements of the times; and the natural increase of lunacy with an increasing population had prevented successive Governments from overtaking that long start. There was now a Bill before the Council—the Habitual Drunkards Bill—which, if passed, would

have the effect of relieving the overcrowded lunatic asylums, because, beyond a doubt, the lunatic asylums of the colony were now most improperly used as retreats for a large number of habitual drunkards. These persons did a great deal of harm to those inmates who were lunatics, and, besides this, they could not be treated in these institutions in the way which science showed was the best way to cure habitual drunkards. It could be satisfactorily proved that, if such an Act as that referred to were passed, a large part of the male patients might at once be removed from the lunatic asylums; and that was one way in which a great deal of good could be done whenever possible. Dr. Skae was a painstaking, laborious officer, who devoted himself with great earnestness to the duties of his profession, and there was no doubt that his reports were most valuable. Had he (Colonel Whitmore) been afraid of such animadversions on the conduct of the Government of which he was a member as his honorable and gallant friend had found it his duty to pass upon them, he might very easily have used that influence which a Government generally possessed to induce Dr. Skae not to write in such strong terms upon this subject; but he went entirely with Dr. Skae, and there was not a word which he did not approve of. He was anxious that the whole matter should go before the public, and that the public attention should be directed to this great evil. The circumstance that the people might choose to blame the Government of which he was a member had not at all weighed with him; and, if the Government now in office could obtain credit for showing greater zeal and going further in alleviating the condition of lunatics than their predecessors, they would have his hearty support and commendation. There was nothing, to his mind, more disgraceful to the country than the state in which the late Government found the lunatic asylums of the colony when they took office. There were in some of the asylums little cells in which there was barely standing-room, yet in which two lunatics were compelled to sleep. Even prisoners under punishment were not subjected to such treatment; and that men of deranged minds and, probably, coarse passions should be so confined was shocking to those who thought on the matter. The honorable gentleman could not accuse him of not having good ground for wishing to make changes in regard to lunatic asylums. Unless he had been perfectly inhuman he must have wished to alter it. In Wellington he had altered the old state of things by a temporary expedient: but that was not what was wanted. What was wanted was a piece of ground two or three hundred acres in extent, altogether away from a large centre of population like this, and yet not so far but that the friends of lunatics might go and see them. It should be in some place where the patients could be employed in farming and other occupations, as they were in one or two asylums in the colony at present. The lunatics in Hokitika were exceedingly well employed in the work of reclaiming land, which by-and-by would be put to great use. In Dunedin they could not be employed in that way, but they were employed

in various other ways—in baking bread for the prisoners, in washing, and in a great many other ways. It would be found that already the Government had contemplated making increased provision for medical officers at the asylums, as suggested by the honorable gentleman. It was proposed to offer them a sum which a medical gentleman might accept, and to require them to live at the asylum and to devote their whole attention and time to the patients. And this was absolutely necessary, because some of the asylums—particularly those at Auckland and Christchurch—were situated at such a distance from town that the patients were, under the present system, really deprived, in the case of sudden illness, of the benefits of medical attendance. But that was not all. It was desirable to have some person who had learned the scientific mode of treating lunacy. He had every reason to believe that the Commissioners of Lunacy in England would provide the colony with two or three suitable men at a salary of £600 a year; and if the prejudice against bringing men from outside could be removed, and if the profession would help the Government, he believed the best thing that could be done would be to get such men as these from Home, so that the lunatics might be treated scientifically. He should be glad to help any Government which could see their way to carry out these proposals. He did not believe equally competent persons could be got from New South Wales; and he preferred having men sent out by the Commissioners of Lunacy. But the worst difficulty was not there, nor in the prejudice people had against sending out of the colony for skill, nor in professional jealousies; but in the want of money for new buildings. In making this protest against the animadversions of the honorable gentleman, he could only say that, if the Government were able to do something more than had been done for the lunatics, they would have no more sincere thanks from anybody than they would have from him.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL had not intended to speak on this question, for he could never think of it without shame and humiliation: but it was impossible for any one to hear what had fallen from the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, by way of protest against the blame cast upon the late Government, without feeling indignation at such sentiments. To whom was the Legislature to look for guidance in a matter of this kind but to the Government of the day? Who else but the honorable gentleman would have pretended that all the evil was owing to the refusal of the Legislature to devote money for a purpose so closely affecting the best feelings of every one in the colony? Had the Government which he had represented in the Council ever proposed to the Parliament the necessity of a vote?

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—Yes.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—Did they ever insist upon it that Parliament should vote the money? Had they ever brought a proper plan of expenditure upon the lunatic asylums of the colony before Parliament? He denied that they had ever done so; and the statement of the

honorable gentleman that they were hopeless of inducing the Parliament to give them the money required was a mere subterfuge. Had they for a moment thought of consulting Parliament, when they entered into contracts for the purchase of Native lands to the extent of a million, when they entered into illegal contracts for railways to the extent of thousands of pounds, or when they wasted thousands of pounds on Native purposes without the slightest regard to the votes in the Appropriation Act? If there was one single object on which the Government would have been justified in spending money not voted by Parliament, surely it would have been in the improvement of the lunatic asylums of the colony. It was deplorable, when the Council knew what large sums of money had been spent without authority in other ways, to see this miserable, wretched subterfuge resorted to by the late Government to shield themselves from blame in this matter. He was ashamed to hear the honorable gentleman speak as he did. Of course it was in his department, and it was natural that he should defend himself from statements showing his maladministration; but every one who read the report of Dr. Skæ must feel his blood tingle within him to find that a Government, which called itself a civilized Government, should first allow such a state of things to occur, and then come down and defend itself in such a manner. Let the Council weigh the correctness of the excuses of the honorable gentleman by one instance. He said that one of the reasons why nothing had been done was that it would have required £300,000 to make the necessary alterations in the asylums.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE.—In one year.

The Hon. Sir F. DILLON BELL.—That was not what Dr. Skæ told them. He said nothing of the kind. He said, after dealing with the figures, "These estimates, together with the liabilities, make a total of over £100,000, which will probably be required to complete the works already on hand or recommended to be undertaken." That was a very different statement. It was shameful that these things should go on as they had done. When the Provincial Councils had the duty imposed upon them, Heaven knew they neglected it, though at any rate they strove to some extent, with their limited means, to carry out reforms: but as soon as the matter passed into the charge of the colony a good deal less was done; and upon the Government of which the honorable gentleman was a member lay the whole blame. They came into power almost immediately after Abolition came fully into operation; they had a large majority; they pretended to come into power to cure the abuses which they said had prevailed under the previous Government; they exhausted the country with a series of orations delivered by one Minister after another, as to the shameful evils which had marked the course of their predecessors, every one of which evils they were going to cure; and yet, among all the administrative failures which could be charged against that Government, among all the things which culminated

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in the rejection of themselves by the country in the session just passed, and again in the present session, there was nothing which had tended more strongly to condemn them than their total disregard of the lunatic asylums of the country. Any honest Government would have looked upon this matter as involving the highest duty, a duty which ought to have been preferred to unauthorized expenditure for log-rolling purposes, to the employment of steamers as yachts, and to spending large sums of money for political objects, as they had done. It was with humiliation and shame that he had seen this; and it was because he knew that the Government at present in office contained one man (Mr. Rolleston) upon whom the country might rely as having always taken an interest in these matters, and who would, at any rate, give his best attention to them, that he thought there was some hope for the future. But the Council must not be deluded into the belief into which the honorable gentleman would lead it, that the late Government was not the most to blame of any Government for having neglected so great a duty.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE was anxious to assure the Hon. Captain Fraser that, as far as he was aware, the medical profession would welcome the adoption of such a proposal as he had submitted. He believed the profession as a whole was in favour of the employment of experts in lunatic asylums. It was true that in some few instances medical men had been personally interested in retaining the old condition of things; but the profession, as a general rule, were aware that in no single disease were the services of experts more valuable than in the treatment of the insane. It was equally recognized by the profession that any successful treatment of the insane must be carried out by medical men residing within the asylums. For his own part, he had no hesitation in saying that the money which had been spent in paying professional men merely to visit asylums occasionally had been for the most part wasted. It would be found that in such asylums the amount of treatment devoted to insanity proper had been slight indeed. It would be found that the treatment had been confined to the administering of a few boluses, purgatives, and draughts; but that was not what was required. What was required was that scientific treatment should be accorded to the disease of insanity. It was impossible to discriminate between the insane who were curable and the insane who were incurable without the closest personal study of each particular case.

The hour of four o'clock having arrived, the Council proceeded to the Orders of the day.

HABITUAL DRUNKARDS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER, in moving the second reading of this Bill, wished to guard himself against the belief that he intended to push it through during the present session. They all agreed that anything which would tend to check drunkenness was very desirable, and it might be that this Bill was well adapted for dealing with the evil to a certain extent; but the Bill was founded on a measure which had been introduced

into the English Parliament, and it was admitted on all sides that it was purely of a tentative character. It might be that it would turn out very well, or, on the other hand, it might be a failure; and he thought it would be rather precipitate to follow the legislation on this subject proposed in England so closely as was proposed on this occasion. His own impression was, that it would have been better to have seen what was the result elsewhere before attempting to deal with this subject, because the experiment would necessarily involve the expenditure of a considerable sum of money in order that it might have a fair trial. It would be necessary to have institutions probably almost as expensive in many instances as lunatic asylums, for the purpose of carrying out the Act; and, looking at the present state of the country and the present state of the finances, he thought it would be injudicious to involve themselves in such an expense in an undertaking of a purely tentative character, without knowing what would be the probable result. However, he was very desirous that the matter should be put fairly before the Council, and discussed, and therefore he would propose the second reading of the Bill, reserving to himself the privilege of either pressing the Bill forward or dropping it. The Bill was prepared by the former Government, and was introduced by the Hon. Colonel Whitmore. Perhaps that honorable gentleman had given more attention to the subject than he (Mr. Whitaker) had been able to do up to the present time. But it struck him that in taking up this matter they were entering upon an undertaking which was still an experiment elsewhere, and that it would probably be better that they should wait and see what was the result elsewhere before trying the experiment themselves with their own money. He would now move the second reading of the Bill, and propose that the Committee should be taken on Tuesday next, when the Council might be in a position to say whether the Bill should proceed further or not.

The Hon. Colonel WHITMORE said this Bill was founded upon a measure introduced into the House of Commons by Dr. Cameron, which was read a second time, and passed through Committee; but what befel it beyond that stage he did not know, but he believed it fell through in consequence of the lateness of the session. It was on all sides favourably commented on in Parliament, to the extent of the voluntary part—that was to say, that part under which a person feeling himself to be subject to this unfortunate failing might voluntarily resign his liberty, and be kept under treatment. In the debate which occurred in the House of Commons there was no difference of opinion at all with regard to that part of the Bill. But there was a difference of opinion as far as the compulsory part went, and Dr. Cameron was advised to withdraw those provisions. He (Colonel Whitmore) did not find, in the Bill as passed through Committee, that they were withdrawn; but Dr. Cameron consented during the debate that, if the feeling of the House appeared to be very strongly opposed to that part of the Bill, he would with-

draw it. It was not hoped by this Bill to effect a radical cure of a great national curse; but it was proposed to do something by way of modifying the evil effects upon society produced by drink. It was hoped that under this Bill they might be able to do something for chronic drunkards—men who had got into a state in which nothing but very strong remedial measures afforded any chance for them; and it was hoped that the system of treatment which had been found successful elsewhere might operate beneficially upon, he was sorry to say, a very considerable portion of our community. He did not think that there were any establishments in New Zealand, except the lunatic asylums, where habitual drunkards were treated. But in England there were many voluntary institutions—not holding powers given by Parliament, but establishments where people voluntarily resigned their liberty. Perhaps a certain amount of force might be used, but it was entirely without the sanction of the law. However, it was found in England, where the system was not as yet legalized, and in the United States and in France, where it was, that the results were very much the same wherever it was fairly tried. According to the statistics quoted by Dr. Cameron in his speech, it appeared that, even in the most unfortunately-managed establishment, what were called “permanent cures” amounted to 33 per cent. of the persons treated. What they called “permanent ascertained cures” were people whose subsequent history they had been able to follow for five years. If after five years they had not relapsed, they were looked upon as permanently cured. It was found that a considerable number could not be traced, and that some had relapsed; but 33 per cent. were traced and found to be permanently cured. That was to say, one-third of the whole of the persons treated were known to have been completely cured after a certain period of confinement in the retreat which on the whole was the least successful of any, and the proportion was as high as 70 per cent. in the most successful establishment. That result ought to encourage them to try for something of the same kind here. Even if no permanent cure were accomplished, he contended that if a man who had the power from our custom and law to render his whole family wretched, those who were dependent upon and could not escape from him—often destroying their happiness in this world, and possibly in the next—begging his fortunes and degrading himself, and, with himself, his family—but who was often a man of the tenderest heart, and who would do anything to escape from this disease or vice that possessed him—could voluntarily resign his liberty for a year, and could check his downward career for a short time, even that little would be an immense boon to his family. There were many persons, unfortunately, who possessed this craving, this disease—if it was one—this madness—who, if they were alone in a room with a barrel of beer, would put their mouth to the bung, and drink until they died—who had positively no control over themselves whatever when they were brought close to liquor. Now, it was

said that there was a mode of treatment, recently very much improved, by which such persons could be satisfactorily dealt with, and, to a large extent, cured; and should they not apply this treatment to such cases? As far as the voluntary part was concerned, he could not see what possible objection there could be to allowing this Bill to pass, except the one which the Attorney-General gave—and of course he must bow to it—namely, the financial one. If the honorable gentleman, in the exercise of his discretion, thought that it was impossible to find the necessary funds for the purpose, of course nothing was to be said. But, even as regards the compulsory part, subject of course to the same reservation, he thought they ought not to hesitate about it. For his part, he would be very willing to allow the liberty of the subject in New Zealand to be interfered with to this extent. It was, after all, proposed to interfere with it to a less extent than was done in the case of a real lunatic, for not half the precautions were taken in the case of lunacy that were insisted upon in this Bill in the case of habitual drunkards. There was every possible opportunity of appeal; every possible step that could suggest itself had been taken to insure that there was no mistake about the matter. And in this case it would not be a matter on which they could have ignorant scientific opinion, such as was quoted by the Hon. Captain Fraser, where some medical gentlemen said that a man was not mad who had the delusion that his wife was the Virgin Mary. It was not a case in which ignorant scientific opinion might injure a man's liberty, as might happen in regard to lunacy, through an ignorant doctor saying that a man was mad when he was not. There must be proof of certain facts—whether the man had been drunk, and was an habitual drunkard or not. That proof would be given by persons who had every opportunity of judging, and no skill was required to ascertain the fact. Then the case was decided by the Resident Magistrate, who was a person, as a rule, accustomed to deal very commonly with this vice, and who probably would be the same Resident Magistrate who had often had to deal with the particular offender. Perhaps it was hardly right, and perhaps not necessary, to appeal to honorable gentlemen on the score of common humanity and the sympathy they might feel for the families of those persons who were oppressed in this dreadful way; but he thought it was a fair question to ask whether, on the whole, it would not be an economy for the State to save many good men who were afflicted with this vice, and who, at present, had got to that state that they oscillated between the publichouses, the police-court, and the gutter—men, many of whom they themselves had in their lives known to be really good men, with nothing against them but this lamentable predisposition to drink. If it were true that there was a means by which these persons could be cured, the State ought not to hesitate, even if it did it against their will, to try to cure them. If honorable gentlemen would look over this Bill they would see that, as he had said, there were many safeguards to prevent anything like malicious

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incarceration of persons who were styled habitual drunkards. From the interpretation clause they would see that an habitual drunkard was defined as follows:—

“‘Habitual drunkard’ means a person who, by reason of habitual intemperate drinking of intoxicating liquor, is dangerous to himself or to others, or incapable of managing himself and his affairs, or is wastefully destroying his property or means; and includes a woman who by reason aforesaid wastefully destroys her husband’s property or means, or fails and neglects to take proper care of her children.”

It was such a person as that they sought to put under restraint for a time. The Resident Magistrate, after hearing the case, had the power to authorize the apprehension and confinement of the drunkard, but by clause 17 it would be found that he could not be confined for less than one month or more than twelve. That gave an opportunity, at any rate at the end of every twelve months, of the case being reconsidered, and it was a very reasonable precaution; while at the same time there were many opportunities of a man being discharged before the expiration of the time, and of his obtaining leave, so that in case of recovery after a short treatment he need not be compulsorily kept on after the object had been attained. There were powers to discharge voluntary patients as well as compulsory patients; and, if honorable gentlemen would look at the clauses in which the retreats were dealt with, they would find that those establishments could only be licensed for a certain time. Therefore every year the keeper of a retreat would be compelled to show that his establishment was properly conducted, or he would not have his license renewed. Then there was ample provision for inspection—not only inspection in a regular way by the order of the Government, but also inspection when a Judge might choose to order it. The 30th clause said,—

“A Judge of the Supreme Court, on an application *ex parte* at chambers, or a District-Court Judge within whose district any home or retreat is situate, may, at any time, by order under his hand, authorize and direct any person or persons to visit and examine a person detained in any home or retreat under this Act, and to inquire into and report on any matters which such Judge may think fit in relation to the person so detained. The Judge, on receiving such report, may, if he shall think fit, order the discharge of any person so detained from any such home or retreat.”

He thought that ought to satisfy any honorable gentleman that, if there was any interference with the liberty of the subject, at all events it was placed under very great restrictions, and was not likely to do any practical injury to the public. He would regret it if the Government, having the means, did not persevere with this Bill; but, as against the financial difficulty, of course he had nothing to say, except to urge that this system might be found, in connection with the lunatic asylums, to be a mode, and not an expensive one, of reducing the number of persons confined in those asylums. The example of drunkards, and the effect of their presence upon

the lunatics, was said by Dr. Skae, and by all writers on the subject, to be exceedingly injurious; and honorable gentlemen who had expressed just now so much sympathy with the condition of those unfortunate persons would also wish to remove from amongst them a class of persons who should not properly be associated with them. It neither tended to advance the cure of lunatics, nor of the drunkards themselves, to subject the latter to the treatment which was ordinarily given to lunatics. He hoped the Council would, at all events, favourably receive the proposition, for very few honorable gentlemen could fail to have seen many lamentable instances of persons whose lives had been entirely wasted, their fortunes destroyed, and the happiness of those belonging to them entirely ruined, through this unfortunate disease, as he believed it to be, and a curable disease, as he was assured it was. Therefore, if they would express an opinion favourable to the Bill, he felt sure that when the Government of the country was in a position to pass such a measure, and to bring it into operation, they would be strengthened in their efforts by such a resolution in the Council.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE understood the Attorney-General to say that it was not the intention of the Government to proceed with this Bill during the present session—that he brought it forward simply that the attention of honorable members and the public might be directed to the subject. It being not likely, then, that the Bill would be proceeded with further this session, he had no objection to make to the course the honorable gentleman had proposed—namely, that the Council should formally read the Bill a second time and then allow it to drop. He was quite willing to admit that this might be a well-intended Bill, but of this he was certain, that it was an extremely ill-considered Bill, and that they would be acting very unwisely indeed were they to give effect to it. Reference had been made to its being founded upon a Bill which was introduced by Dr. Cameron into the British Parliament. He held in his hand a copy of Dr. Cameron’s Bill as it was amended in Committee by the House of Commons. He was not aware whether it got into any stage beyond the committal; but it would probably astonish honorable gentlemen to be informed that the whole scope and tendency of that Bill was to give effect to a provision which was at the present time on our Statute Book in the 21st clause of “The Lunatics Act, 1868,” which, by the present Bill, it was sought to repeal. If honorable gentlemen would turn to that clause they would find that it was in the power of any person, distrustful of his own power to control himself as regarded temperance, to make application to a Judge of the Supreme Court, who, after hearing the case, might decide that compliance might be given to his request, and that he should, for a period of twelve months, be kept in detention in some asylum. That provision now in our Statute Book accomplished all which Dr. Cameron’s Bill, as amended by the House of Commons, sought to accomplish. In this respect, as in some other respects, we had been far in advance of English

public opinion, having had for some years on our Statute Book a law which in England was not yet passed, and which during the last session had only been favourably entertained. This Bill contained some of the most extraordinary provisions that were ever introduced into a Statute. He could not imagine a greater interference with individual liberty than was here sought to be made. There was a new penal provision in this Bill. Upon the application of any relative of a drunkard, or any guardian of a drunkard, without that drunkard's personal appearance in a Court of justice, he might be sentenced to be incarcerated for a period of twelve months. This was a new penal provision, and it would certainly be open to very considerable abuse. Such a provision it was proposed to insert in Dr. Cameron's Bill in England, but it was scouted by the British Parliament as being an interference with the liberty of the subject that ought not to be tolerated. If honorable members would look into the Bill closely they would be somewhat astonished to see that, upon the application of the parent, husband, wife, relative, or guardian of any person who was considered to be an habitual drunkard, a Resident Magistrate might, on proof of the summons, whether the person summoned appeared or not, sentence him to what was practically a term of imprisonment of not less than one month or more than twelve months. Now in cases of positive crime they would not think of sentencing a criminal to a month's or twelve months' imprisonment without his personal attendance at the hearing of the case. It would not be sufficient to prove that the summons had been served. Actual personal attendance would be required. The opportunity of defending himself would be afforded to the person. Yet under this Bill it would be possible for a man to be imprisoned for a period of twelve months without his personal attendance being required, and without his having that opportunity of defending himself which should be afforded to every freeborn subject. He thought he had shown that the compulsory clause in this Bill was extremely objectionable; and, as regarded the voluntary provision, that was already on the Statute Book. There were one or two other points to which he would call the attention of the Attorney-General, and on which it would be well they should take action before proceeding further with the Bill. First of all, he would like to know whether this Bill had been referred to the County Councils for their report. It was proposed to make County Councils responsible for the custody of habitual drunkards—they were to become a charge upon the County Council funds. He thought the opinions of the County Councils should at any rate be requested, and the matter brought to their knowledge, before any action whatever was taken. There was a provision that if a County Council did not act in accordance with the intention of this Bill the Government should step in, and, at the expense of the County Council, create homes for habitual drunkards. He could not help feeling that the effect of the Bill would be to impose an altogether unlooked-for burden upon the coun-

ties, and that it was a totally different Bill from what any one might suppose on merely reading its title. It appeared to him that a person who was an habitual drunkard, and who was distrustful of his own power to control himself, had no right to cast himself as a burden upon the State for twelve months. The community should not be called upon to step in and take care of such a man unless at the same time it became entitled to the fruits of his labour. If he was to be reclaimed at the expense of the Government of this country, or at the expense of a County Council, then certainly the Government or that County Council should have the benefit of his labour, so that it might recoup itself to some extent for the expense cast upon it by reclaiming him. Even if it were desirable to proceed with this Bill, it would not be competent for the Council to do so, because clause 8 was clearly an appropriation clause. He believed there was already on the Statute Book a law which provided sufficiently for the control of habitual drunkards, and, although it might be desirable to create the machinery sought to be created by this Bill, still the country was not in a position to afford the expense; and for these reasons he opposed the Bill, although nominally assenting to the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES wished to draw the attention of the honorable member in charge of the Bill to the fact that the Bill introduced into the Imperial Parliament was purely a tentative measure, but the provisions of this Bill went further than those of that Bill did. But an important objection taken in the House of Lords to that Bill was, that it gave no guarantee that the person who voluntarily applied to be admitted into the refuge was really a free agent. When he took that step he might be labouring under some temporary depression and might be acting under the influence and advice of friends; and further, if from the action he took when labouring under this depression he was placed in the refuge, at the end of the first term his friends or the persons who advised him to seek this retreat might be enabled under the provisions of the Bill to keep him there, because at the conclusion of the time for which the person voluntarily sought refuge his relatives or friends might appear before a magistrate and give evidence to the effect that it was undesirable that he should be released. The clause allowing a person voluntarily to take shelter in an English refuge did not require that the matter should be decided by a magistrate. The applicant could obtain admission on his application being certified to by a Justice of the Peace or a solicitor of the Supreme Court. Then, if the friends of this person who volunteered to retire into this place desired to keep him there, they could do so by making an application to the magistrate—an application which might be considered by the magistrate in private, without the necessity of the party to whom it referred appearing before him—who had power by law to keep him there for another twelve months; and so the thing might go on *ad infinitum*. He did not say such a thing would be done, but this was a power which might be

Hon. Mr. Waterhouse

abused; and he wished to draw attention to the desirableness of an alteration in this provision, giving some safeguard such as that the first application should be heard by a magistrate in open Court, and that the person on account of whom the second application was made should be present when it was made.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN agreed entirely with the observations made by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse as to the absence of any necessity for this Bill, and, secondly, as to the imperfect, not to say objectionable, character of the legislation proposed in the Bill. He thought that, for all the needs that existed at present in the colony, the provisions of the Act now in force, and which he had had the honor of introducing into the Council ten years ago, were sufficient. In several places where accommodation for such patients had been provided, many persons had availed themselves of the provisions of that Act, and he was not aware that any defect had been found in the actual working. But, looking at the fact that there would be great difficulty in finding funds to provide for existing asylums, it seemed almost impossible, supposing it were necessary to proceed with legislation such as was proposed, that the machinery could be found for carrying it out; and under these circumstances, and as he understood it was the desire of the Government that the motion should be disposed of at once, he would move, That the Bill be ordered to be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment agreed to.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 30th October, 1879.

First Readings—Second Readings—Third Reading—Bill Discharged—Auckland Expenditure—Commissioner of Railways, Middle Island—J. McQueen—Warkworth Courthouse—Waste Lands Board Sittings, Greymouth—Chinese Immigration—High School Reserves Bill—A. and H. Kaihau—Gold- and Diamond Prospecting, Canterbury—Polling-places—Rabbit Nuisance—Electoral Rolls—Friendly Societies—Summonses Issued, Wellington—Native Expenditure—Maniototo Crown Lands—Brighton Railway—B. Walker and W. McWhirter—Slaughterhouses Bill—Government Banking Arrangements Committee—Honorarium—Local Self-government—Gold Duty—New River Pilot-Station Reserve Bill—Wellington Harbour Board Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Land-Tax Bill, Prevention of Corruption Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Heathcote Bridges Bill, District Courts Bill.

THIRD READING.

Hawke's Bay and Marlborough Rivers Bill.

BILL DISCHARGED.

Kirk's Land Road Bill.

AUCKLAND EXPENDITURE.

Mr. HISLOP asked the Premier, Upon what principle the Government intend to base the adjustment of the expenditure of public money in the Provincial District of Auckland and the remainder of New Zealand, in pursuance of their agreement with some of the Auckland members of the House; and upon what works they intend to expend any money due to Auckland in pursuance of such adjustment; also, the amount which they estimate will be due to Auckland? There had been considerable difference of opinion expressed as to the principle upon which money raised by loan should be distributed. In order to set at rest any doubts that might be entertained, he had put this question on the Order Paper. A short time ago one of the members of the Government stated that the present Government was going to be a singular contrast to the last Government in the fulness with which it would answer any question put by honorable members. He would not say whether they had presented such a contrast in the questions they had already answered; but he hoped they would afford a contrast in regard to this question, and that the House would have fuller information on this subject than they had hitherto obtained.

Mr. HALL said the honorable member did no more than justice to the Government, when he suggested that they would give the fullest possible information on all subjects, and would be as explicit as possible. He would be so on the present occasion. The honorable gentleman asked, "Upon what principle the Government intend to base the adjustment of the expenditure of public money in the Provincial District of Auckland and the remainder of New Zealand, in pursuance of their agreement with some of the Auckland members of the House?" Without admitting that there was any agreement for the expenditure of any particular sum of money, their principle was this: that they would, in the adjustment of the expenditure of public money, as far as practicable, do justice to all parts of New Zealand. He could not be more explicit than that. The honorable member asked, secondly, "Upon what works the Government intend to expend any money due to Auckland, in pursuance of such adjustment?" The honorable gentleman would learn that when the Public Works Statement was made. He was sure the honorable gentleman did not wish to anticipate that Statement. To the last portion of the honorable member's question, the answer was, that no "estimate" had yet been made tending to show what amount "will be due to Auckland."

COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS, MIDDLE ISLAND.

Mr. HISLOP asked the Government, Whether it has yet been decided to have the office of the Commissioner of Railways, Middle Island, removed to Dunedin, or permanently placed in Christchurch; also, whether the report of the Commissioner on the subject will be laid before this House? Since putting the question on the Paper, he had received the printed report of the

Commissioner, and therefore he would only ask the first part of the question.

Mr. OLIVER replied that the Government had arrived at no decision upon this matter. The report of the Commissioner had been printed and distributed nearly a month ago.

J. McQUEEN.

Mr. SHRIMSKI asked the Government, What action they intend taking in reference to the petition of Jane McQueen and family, and which was favourably reported on by the Waste Lands Committee on 29th July last? The petitioner and her family had paid their own passage to this colony, but, through ignorance of the law, they had not made application for land within the specified time, and therefore had been unable to obtain the land to which they were otherwise entitled.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he had only just been able to ascertain the particulars. The petition had not been forwarded to the Government. The Government would consider this case together with a considerable number of similar petitions with regard to immigrants' land orders. It appeared that there had been promises and understandings in reference to the carrying-out of the Act which had led to very considerable misapprehension. He had taken steps to have the petitions collated, in order to see the general bearing of them, and hoped to be able to make a proposal to have them dealt with generally by the House.

WARKWORTH COURTHOUSE.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier, If it is the intention of the Government to place a sum of money on the estimates for the purpose of constructing a Courthouse at Warkworth, a site having been purchased for the above purpose in the township? He might state that at the present time the Petty Sessions Court, the Resident Magistrate's Court, and the Licensing Court all sat at Warkworth, and they had not a Courthouse in which to hold their sittings. The erection of a Courthouse was therefore a public necessity, and he hoped the Government would give a favourable answer to the question.

Mr. ROLLESTON replied that directions had been given to place a sum on the estimates for the purpose mentioned.

WASTE LANDS BOARD SITTINGS, GREY-MOUTH.

Mr. MASTERS asked the Minister of Lands, If he will make the necessary arrangements for periodical sittings of the Westland Waste Lands Board being held at Greymouth?

Mr. ROLLESTON said that at present there was no power under the Act to have a sitting of the Waste Lands Board at Greymouth. The Government would make inquiries, in order to see whether satisfaction would not be given by greater facilities being afforded, at the District Survey Office there, for the inspection of maps and other matters connected with the purchase of land.

Mr. Hislop

CHINESE IMMIGRATION.

Mr. GISBORNE asked the Premier, Whether the Government will introduce this session a Bill to regulate the immigration of Chinese into this colony? A Bill to regulate the immigration of Chinese to the colony was introduced into the House last session, and the Governor's Speech gave a promise that a Bill on the subject would be introduced during the present session.

Mr. HALL replied that the Government did intend to introduce a Bill.

HIGH SCHOOL RESERVES BILL.

Mr. GISBORNE asked the Minister of Education, Whether the Government will introduce, this session, a Bill prepared by the late Government, and intitled "An Act to authorize Governors of High Schools to realize on their Reserves and Endowments, and to provide for the Investment of the Proceeds thereof"? A notice of a Bill to be introduced was given last session, authorizing the governors of high schools to realize on their reserves and endowments, and to make provision for the investment of the proceeds. The Bill merely gave the governors of high schools the power which was enjoyed by the Canterbury College under "The Canterbury Reserves Sale and Leasing Act, 1876." He wished to know whether the Minister of Education would introduce that Bill, or a similar measure, for the consideration of the House.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Government had only become aware of the existence of the Bill from the honorable gentleman's question, and they had not had time to consider the matter fully. He might say that, so far as he could see, it would not be desirable to introduce this Bill now, pending the report of the Commissioners appointed to report upon secondary education and the question of dealing with endowments for secondary schools generally. It might be advisable to give facilities during the present session where an absolute necessity had been shown for it of the kind referred to, but the Government did not intend to introduce a general Bill this session. He had carefully perused the Bill, and found it to be of a most general character. In the present state of the country there was no very general demand for land for purposes of investment, and the price of land was not very high. There could be no real necessity for parting with land for the purpose of reinvesting the proceeds.

A. AND H. KAIHAU.

Major TE WHEORO asked the Government, Whether they will give effect to the report of the Native Affairs Committee on the petition of Ahipene and Henare Kaihau?

Mr. BRYCE said the Government would take this matter into their consideration, and would make the inquiries which were suggested in the report of the Native Affairs Committee. He was not prepared to say that the Government would pay this money. That would depend greatly on the result of the inquiries. If the honorable gentleman was not satisfied with this reply, it would be competent for him to bring forward a

motion to the effect that the money should be paid.

Mr. KELLY would like the honorable gentleman to state what was the matter referred to in the question.

Mr. BRYCE said it had reference to a claim of the Maoris for compensation for an old carved war-canoe which had been removed from Hokianga to Auckland during the war in 1860. The claim had been before various Committees of the House on several occasions, and some indefinite reports had been made. The last report recommended that the Natives should receive £700, to be reduced by any amount which had been previously paid to the Maoris on that account. He was not prepared to say that the amount would be paid.

GOLD- AND DIAMOND- PROSPECTING, CANTERBURY.

Mr. ANDREWS asked the Government, If there is any standing offer as a money bonus for the discovery of gold or diamonds in the Canterbury Provincial District; also, if the Government are prepared to recommend some kind of bonus to encourage further prospecting, and the exploration of the waste lands of Canterbury? The people were naturally anxious that something should be done towards opening up the valuable minerals lying between the east and west coasts of Canterbury. Since he put the question on the Paper, he saw a telegram from Sydney in last night's paper, reading in this way: "Owing to the recent discoveries of gold in the colony, a tremendous mining revival has set in." The Government should give some encouragement for prospecting on the east and west coasts of Canterbury.

Mr. OLIVER replied that a sum of £5,000 would be placed on the estimates for gold discoveries. The same reward would be paid for discoveries made in Canterbury as elsewhere.

POLLING-PLACES.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Premier, If he will lay before the House copies of all correspondence and telegrams referring to the alteration of polling-places at the late election? He had been informed that some of the polling-places had been abolished under rather peculiar circumstances before the late elections. He thought it would be well if the information were supplied by the Government.

Mr. HALL said the Government would have the documents copied and laid on the table.

RABBIT NUISANCE.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they intend to take any steps to promote the establishment of a manufactory for phosphorus in the colony, for rabbit-destroying purposes? He would like, with the permission of the House, to extend the question, and ask if the Government would also take into consideration the necessity of abolishing the duty on powder, or give greater facilities for obtaining powder than existed at present. He did not desire a decided answer at once, but would be glad to

know whether the Government intended to take that matter into their consideration.

Mr. HALL said that the Government could not give an answer to the additional question which the honorable gentleman had just asked. They would give full consideration to it. With regard to phosphorus, if it was as effectual as it seemed to be, the demand would be temporary only. The Government would consider the matter; but he would suggest to the honorable gentleman that he should induce the Committee on Local Industries, recently appointed, to take up this question.

An Hon. MEMBER. — "Tariff" is the name of it.

Mr. HALL added, the Committee had to consider any means by which local industries might be promoted, and this would include the manufacture of phosphorus.

ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. GISBORNE asked the Premier, Whether he will lay before this House a return showing, approximately, the number of times, beyond once, that the names of the same persons appear on the electoral rolls of the colony? The reason why he asked this question was, that at the present time it was impossible to institute any reliable comparison between the number of adult males in the colony and those on the electoral roll, unless they knew the number of males who appeared more than once on the rolls. He knew there would be a great difficulty in making such a return, because the same name might belong to different persons; but he thought that, by a little trouble on the part of the compiler, and with the assistance of the Registration Officers, an approximate return could be given, which would be very useful when the consideration of Electoral Bills came before the House.

Mr. HALL said the Government were very desirous of affording any information which did not entail an unreasonable sacrifice of public money. But his honorable friend had been long enough connected with public affairs to be aware that the preparation of this return would be a very tedious and expensive work indeed: every electoral roll in the colony, and every name on those rolls, would have to be gone through. The Government did not think that any result obtainable would justify the expenditure.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

Mr. PITT asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether the Government will take such action as may be necessary for removing doubts which exist as to the sufficiency or otherwise of the scale of money contributions of the members of many of the friendly societies in this colony, in order that such societies may obtain the full benefits of registration under "The Friendly Societies Act, 1877"? He was induced to ask this question at the instance of some friendly societies, because it was a very important matter concerning those societies, especially Odd Fellows and Foresters. Under the Friendly Societies Act of 1877, before any society could be registered under that Act, the table of contributions by members had to be

certified by the actuary attached to the office of the Registrar, or by some actuary approved by the Governor, who had exercised the profession of actuary for five years. He understood that the actuary appointed by the Government in the case of many societies who had attempted to have their rules registered had declined to certify that the scale of contributions was sufficient. Now, that being the case, many societies, in former times registered, had been unable to have their amended rules registered under the Act, and were therefore debarred from the benefits conferred on registered societies under the Act. He need hardly point out the advantages of these societies, not only to themselves, but to the public at large. They provided for sickness, paid medical attendance, and made some provision for the widows and orphans of deceased members. These societies possessed a very large amount of funds, and in some instances very valuable properties; and he thought it most important that this question should be set at rest—namely, whether these contributions were sufficient or insufficient—because, if the Government Actuary was right in the matter, very serious consequences might accrue in time to come. Many of the societies asserted that, notwithstanding the opinion of the Government Actuary, their scale of contributions was sufficient. It was most important that this matter should be set right. As to how the question was to be solved, no doubt the Government would think it worthy of consideration; and he should be very glad to hear from the Government that they proposed to take it into their consideration, with a view to having the matter settled. He thought it most unsatisfactory that the question should remain in the position it at present occupied.

Mr. HALL said the thanks of the House were due to the honorable member for having called attention to this important subject. He quite agreed with the honorable gentleman that the matter was now in a very unsatisfactory condition; the Government would therefore give it their best attention. They expected in a few days to receive the annual report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and the Government would then consider whether any and what steps could be taken with the view of arriving at some satisfactory conclusion in the matter.

SUMMONSES ISSUED, WELLINGTON.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Minister of Justice, Whether he will state the number of summonses that have been issued from the Resident Magistrate's Court of Wellington since the commencement of the year; and also the number of persons who have been committed to prison for non-payment of debt during the same period?

Mr. ROLLESTON said he held in his hand the return asked for by the honorable member. It was as follows:—

"Number of summonses issued out of the Resident Magistrate's Court, Wellington, from 1st January, 1879, to 30th October, 1879: Summonses, 2,867; judgment summonses, 351: total, 3,188. Number of persons committed to prison for non-payment of debts from 1st January, 1879,

Mr. Pitt

to 30th October, 1879: Committed, 27; number of warrants issued, 73.—W. P. JAMES, Clerk of Court."

Mr. THOMSON inquired if the return would be laid on the table.

Mr. ROLLESTON laid the return on the table.

NATIVE EXPENDITURE.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Native Minister, If he will lay before this House a return—(1) of expenditure by the Native Department from the 1st July, 1869, to 13th October, 1877, under the following heads: Native officers, food, clothing, gratuities, and contingencies; (2) a similar return of expenditure for the same purposes from 1st June, 1869, to 13th October, 1877; (3) a return of expenditure under the Civil list for Native purposes from 1st July, 1869, to 13th October, 1877; (4) a return of expenditure under the Civil list for Native purposes from 1st July, 1869, to 13th October, 1877? He would like to amend his question slightly by moving that 2 and 4 be struck out, as they were simply repetitions. He had been led to ask this question in consequence of a promise he made when he was nominated for a seat in that House. He stated that he would ask for such a return. He believed a similar return had been asked for in another place, so that he did not understand there would be extra expense incurred.

Mr. BRYCE said he must ask the honorable member to be so kind as to put this question off, say, till Tuesday. He thought that by that time it was quite possible information would be on the table, not exactly in the form asked for in the question, but which would satisfy the practical requirements of the question. If the honorable member would be kind enough to put the question off until Tuesday, he (Mr. Bryce) would then be able to give the honorable member a definite reply on the subject.

Mr. HAMLIN said that, at the honorable gentleman's request, he would postpone his question until Tuesday.

MANIOTOTO CROWN LANDS.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that in the Land Act of 1877 provision was made, in clauses 75 to 85 inclusive, for the settlement of pastoral land on deferred payment. The system had not yet largely come into force, being contingent upon the pastoral leases falling in. It was provided in these sections that Commissioners should classify the lands prior to their being set apart for sale upon pastoral deferred payments, and it was also provided that, one year before the leases expired, these lands, after classification, might be offered for sale by public auction. The object of his motion was merely to call attention to the administrative functions at present vested in the Governor, to whom appertained the power of appointing Commissioners. The bulk of the Crown land in Otago was at present under lease, and a great number of the leases would expire at periods ranging from 1880 onwards—the greater proportion of them in 1882 and 1883—and he moved in the matter now because he wished to in-

sure that the classification required by law should take place at a sufficiently early period to allow of the principle of dealing with pastoral lands as laid down in the Act being fully placed on its trial. He presumed that the Legislature had not placed this provision on its Statute Book simply to mock the people; but he very much feared that, if the House did not watch the administrative functions of the Act, filtered as those functions were through irresponsible Boards, they would find that the proper steps would not be taken, and that the leases would again have to be renewed for short periods, until such time as the law could be properly applied. He had no very great faith in the principle of administration through irresponsible Boards, but that system existed, and it appeared to him that the Ministry of the day must take the initiative in bringing these pastoral deferred-payment provisions into operation. He had not attempted to make the motion general in its scope. It applied only to one county, but there were two or three inland counties the conditions of which were almost similar, and, although he had taken action in the interests only of the county he represented, he would be very glad to see the principle extended. Though these inland counties contained some land of very fair agricultural quality, a large extent of it was mountainous, and could only be profitably utilized by combining the functions of the agricultural farmer with those of the deferred-payment pastoral farmer. If the land was to be settled upon under the agricultural system, and if the hills were to be let, the result would be that they would all fall into a few hands; and it should be the desire of the House to afford the fullest facilities to persons who were desirous of competing for pastoral land, such as were given in the case of competition for agricultural land. The result of the motion, he would point out, would not hasten the time under which the law enabled this land to be utilized in the way he proposed. He merely wished the land to be classified, and put into the market on pastoral deferred payments as soon as the leases expired. There was a large population in the inland districts who had been holding on to their ordinary avocations for a great many years in the hope that the march of progress under the public works policy would place them in a better position, and enable them to earn profitable livelihoods out of the soil. Unfortunately, year after year went by, public works did not progress very fast inland, and the result was that numbers of people were swarming down to the towns, and helping to crowd the already overcrowded communities. He hoped the Government would express themselves favourably upon the motion, and that the House would agree to it.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that Commissioners should immediately be appointed to classify Crown lands in the County of Maniototo; and that, in the vicinities of Naseby, Hamilton, Hyde, and Blackstone Hill, lands which may be classified as 'pastoral land' should be sold by auction, in terms of 'The Land Act, 1877,' on

pastoral deferred payments, in sufficient and suitable areas, twelve months before the expiry of the now existing leases."—(*Mr. De Lautour.*)

Mr. ROLLESTON admitted the importance of the subject to which the motion referred, but, if he understood the honorable gentleman aright, he did not wish the terms of the motion to be strictly acted upon. He might explain that the position of the matter, so far as he could ascertain, did not quite correspond with the statement of the honorable gentleman, who said he did not wish to precipitate anything that would be done at the expiry of these leases. The leases did not expire until 1883.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR.—1882.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he was informed that they did not expire until 1883. They comprised an area of country half a million of acres in extent, and of this half-million acres a quarter of a million was reserved in compliance with what was always understood to be the railway policy of the honorable member for Port Chalmers—that was, that the land should not be put up for sale now, but should be kept back until it got increased value from the construction of what was known as the Central Otago Railway. Now, he did not understand the object of the motion, if the honorable gentleman did not wish to precipitate the sale of this land. To send Commissioners now to classify land which, according to the policy laid down, would be very largely increased in value when the railway was finished, would be a very great mistake. They would value the land in its present condition, and no good object would be served by doing that with a view to disposing of it in 1882. If the honorable gentleman wished the land to be sold as agricultural land now, there was nothing to prevent the Government determining that a portion of it should be put up for sale on deferred payments; but it would serve no good purpose to precipitate the classification of land which could be better classified in the light of further experience, and with the knowledge of the increased value that would no doubt be given to it by the Central Railway. He saw no objection to the honorable gentleman's motion on that understanding, and he quite sympathized in his desire to see this land utilized for settlement at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. PYKE thought the Minister of Lands had not read this motion with the care he usually bestowed on other important matters. If he would read it again, he would see that it only asked that the classification should take place twelve months before the expiry of the existing leases. It did not ask that the classification should be made now.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—It asks that the Commissioners shall be immediately appointed.

Mr. PYKE.—They were to be immediately appointed to classify, but the land was not to be sold until twelve months before the expiry of the existing leases. And it was desirable that it should be so, because it was certain that the land would fetch a better price than if sold after the leases had entirely run out. The leases in the Maniototo County, and in the county adjacent,

expired in 1882—in fact, some of them expired in 1881, and one in 1880—and it was desirable that the classification should be made, not with undue precipitancy, but with all convenient speed. It was desirable, if only for the purpose of setting the minds of the people at rest. The people of Otago had been so strangely dealt with in the administration of the land laws in the interior of the province, that they had ceased to have any faith in the administration of the land laws. They said now, "Give us some assurance that the existing law, as placed on the Statute Book, shall be carried out on the expiration of these leases. Let us be quite sure that we shall no longer be troubled with

— these juggling fends,
That palter with us in a double sense,
Keeping the word of promise to the ear,
To break it to the hope."

There had been too much of that sort of thing in the past. The restrictive land laws of Otago had been of such a nature as nearly to depopulate the interior, and, unless strong measures were taken, before the expiry of these leases, to prevent the recurrence of the same sort of thing, he ventured to say the country would revert into its original state and become a howling wilderness. The Government should, therefore—he did not say immediately, but as soon as possible—have the land classified; and, if they did that, they would afford far more satisfaction to the people of the part of the country from which he came than they would by any theoretical amendments of the electoral laws. He intended to move an amendment to the motion, which he trusted the mover would accept. He would propose that, after the word "Maniototo," the words "and the County of Vincent" be inserted, and after the words "Blackstone Hill" the words "Black's, Alexander's, Clyde, and Cromwell," be inserted. The nature of the two counties was very similar, and they comprised about one and a quarter millions of acres of lands which were purely pastoral, and could not be used for any other purpose.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR had no objection to accept the amendment.

Mr. McLEAN would like to amend the resolution still further, so as to have the whole of the runs in Otago classified, and not only those in the Maniototo and Vincent Counties. It was necessary that that should be done. He was very glad to find that the honorable members for Mount Ida and Dunstan considered that there was such a good Government in power now that they must continue in office for three years, and he trusted their sense of duty would lead them to support the Government during that time. He would suggest that, whether the resolution were carried or not, the Government should have the whole of the lands in Otago classified, and then the Waste Lands Board would be better able to deal with it. He did not agree with what the mover had said about the Waste Lands Board of Otago, for he felt sure that they had done their duty well. No body of gentlemen could have attended to their duties better than had that Board, for he did not believe there had been many meetings of the Board at which there had not been a full attendance; and

that showed that they had the interests of settlement at heart. However, it would be a great assistance to them if the whole of the lands in Otago were classified, and that was what he would suggest should be done.

Mr. DICK did not wish to oppose the motion, but he did not exactly like the look of it, and he thought the amendment made matters worse. He did not know how many millions of acres of land might be put into the market at once if it were carried. For instance, the honorable member for Dunstan suggested two and a quarter millions of acres.

Mr. PYKE.—No; I merely said there were about a million and a quarter acres of pastoral land in the two counties.

Mr. DICK.—Anyhow, the Minister of Lands said that the proposition of the honorable member for Mount Ida would admit of half a million acres being thrown into the market at once.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Not at once. The position was this: that, under the law as it stood—under the existing law—before the expiry of the leases, which would be in the month of March, 1883, a classification of the land must take place; and therefore, as it seemed to him, there was no occasion for the honorable member for Mount Ida to attempt by a resolution to anticipate the action which was provided for by the law.

Mr. DICK did not mean at once—immediately—but at one time: he meant that the whole of the land would be put into the market at one time. When a large area of land was put into the market at one time, it seemed to him that an injustice was done to the district. He would much rather see the land put up by degrees. When that was done they did not find that large blocks passed into the hands of single speculators for all time. He would prefer to see the land in the neighbourhood of towns—such as Cromwell, Clyde, and the others mentioned in the motion—put into the market in small blocks, instead of putting up the whole of the back-country at once. He thought the honorable members were doing an injustice to their districts in pressing for the whole of the land to be classified and surveyed and put into the market at one time. The result might be that thousands of acres might pass into the hands of one man: he might apply for some thousands of acres, and he might work it so that his sons could get a few thousand acres each; and thus many thousands of acres would pass away from the people. There would be no loss if the land in the neighbourhood of townships were put up so that people who really wished to settle the country could obtain it. He would much prefer that a judicious and wise control was exercised by the Waste Lands Board in this matter, and that they should leave the back-country untouched, until there was a demand for land and the settlers in the district wished to take it up.

Mr. IRELAND was under the impression that the meaning of the resolution was, that the land in question should be ready to be dealt with at the proper time, if the Government felt disposed to put it into the market. He could see nothing in the resolution affirming the principle that the

Mr. Pyke

land was to be sold as the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick) suggested. He held that it would be well if the whole of the land throughout the colony were classified, so that there might be no delay when the time came for selling it. In many instances where people had been desirous of settling on the land, and had been trying for years to get it, they had been met by the objection that it had not been surveyed. The consequence was, he believed, that many persons had left the colony owing to the fact that they could not obtain land at the time they wanted it. He had great faith in the deferred-payment system, and if people were willing to take advantage of it no impediment should be thrown in their way. He believed the great curse of the colony hitherto had been that obstacles had been placed in the way of persons desirous of obtaining land.

Mr. MACANDREW did not believe there was any intention in this resolution to force the land into the market at once: that would be absurd. Whatever Government might be in power would, no doubt, always act so as to regulate the supply to the demand. The Minister of Lands was mistaken in saying that this land had been reserved as a security for the construction of the railway. It was reserved from sale with a view of being sold afterwards, and the proceeds applied to the construction of the railway; and he hoped that, by the time these leases fell in, the railway would be to a considerable extent constructed, and trains running upon it. The consequence would be, that a large amount of *bond fide* settlement would take place; and therefore the sooner the classification of the land took place the better. That was the object of the motion. He believed that, if the work were gone about deliberately and carefully, it would be found that a great deal of this land, which was said to be purely pastoral, would be suitable for small farms. Probably it would be found that in every five thousand acres there were fifty or a hundred or two hundred acres suitable for an agricultural farm. With regard to classifying the whole of the lands in Otago, he might say that there had been already a classification of those lands, although not so minutely as was proposed in the resolution.

Mr. MURRAY did not see the necessity for this motion. The House was told that it would be 1881 before these lands could be sold, and, if this resolution were passed, the House would be anticipating any future steps it might be disposed to take in the way of passing more liberal land laws: if this land were sold before the railway was constructed, a premium would be given to speculation. He could quite understand that honorable gentlemen who were members or Chairmen of County Councils would desire to have as much land as possible put into the market as soon as that could be done. Twenty per cent. of the proceeds of the deferred-payment lands went to those bodies, and therefore it was thought desirable, in the interests of those bodies, to secure as much as possible of the public spoil.

Mr. PYKE objected to the honorable member for Bruce imputing such motives to honorable members.

Mr. MURRAY was not aware the honorable member would take the allusion to himself: but "conscience doth make cowards of us all." He made no special charge against the honorable member. However, if the cap fitted him, let him wear it. This Central Otago Railway was to be made out of the proceeds of land sales, as he was informed; but the attempt now being made to divert portions of that money to county purposes would result in the cost of making the railway being provided for out of colonial funds. He could see no purpose in bringing this motion forward, unless it was necessary that members should keep themselves before their constituents.

Mr. STEWART thought this motion was one of very considerable importance, and one which should not be neutralized by making it too wide in the manner indicated by the honorable member for Waikouaiti. The object of classification, he apprehended, was to enable those who lived in Otago to look forward to the time when they would be able to acquire an interest in land in that locality. If classification were put off until the last moment, a number of persons who might have their attention directed to that locality with the view of acquiring property, would not be able to do so. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick) had slightly confused the classification of land with the sale of land. The two things were totally distinct, and classification might take place at any time twelve months before the lease expired. The sale was a mere matter of arrangement for the Government to carry out, and they would no doubt place it in the market according to the demand. The strong feature which ought to govern this question had been pointed out by the honorable member for Mount Ida. That was, that the sooner classification of the land took place the better, inasmuch as a person not only in Otago, but out of Otago, might look forward to a time when he could make an effort to acquire land if he knew what the nature of the land was and the result of the classification. As had been pointed out by the honorable member for Port Chalmers, by the time the land was open for sale the railway would be in full working order, and the demand for land in that locality would probably be very considerable.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR, in reply, would like to correct one or two statements. He had stated that the leases expired in 1882. In the tabulated return in the Journals of 1877—which was a very useful return, and which he hoped would be kept up to date—it would be found that the first run in Maniototo expired on the 4th September, 1882; the second run, on the 5th September, 1882; the third, on the 8th December, 1882; the fourth, on the 5th September, 1882; the fifth, on the same date; and so on. There were one or two in 1883; but, with those one or two exceptions, they all fell in 1882. Now we had reached the end of 1879.

Mr. ROLLESTON said there was another return. He did not doubt what the honorable member stated; but he (Mr. Rolleston) got a return from the most reliable source—from the office—but there was no doubt that there was a discrepancy, which made him doubtful. He was

assured positively that none of those runs fell in until 1883.

Mr. MURRAY said there was a year's grace.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR was not talking about "grace;" he left that to the honorable member for Bruce. He was talking about facts. The Statute said those pastoral deferred-payment allotments might be put up for sale twelve months before the expiration of the leases. It did not say anything about grace. It fixed a positive date. As to the County Councils getting the revenue, there was a Bill already before the House expressly to take away that revenue from the County Councils. Both Governments had introduced that, and he thought they had a very strong chance of passing it into law; so there could be no object on his part to swell the County Council revenue by having this provision of the Act put into force. His object had been explained by the honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Stewart). These lands were of immense value, and he wanted the colony to know it in time, in order to deal with it wisely and well. A year was a very short time to act. Their Commissioners had to furnish them with a report which they could place on their records as an authentic and final one. It would take them all their time. The seasons were not always advantageous, and a year was not a bit too soon to take steps to have those matters settled. He certainly wanted to draw attention to this, and he wanted the law to be put into operation. He wanted the people in his district to know what they might look forward to if they remained in the interior of Otago—what their ultimate destiny would be, and whether they would have an opportunity of acquiring pastoral lands on deferred payments or not. Equally so, he wished that other people coming into the country from Australia or elsewhere should be able to go to the Land Office and ascertain what lands were to be open for sale next year or the year after. At present they would have to be told that there was no land for them, and that nothing was being done to put land into the market. The honorable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Dick) had misinterpreted his motion. It was simply a motion for classification; the whole business of sale rested with the Government. Although he was not at all prepared to support the present Government, yet whatever Ministry was in power must have this discretion. When the honorable member for Waikouaiti joined the present Government, he would have more confidence in them; but even then he would not give them an unhesitating support. He hoped the House would support this motion, which would do good, and could do no harm. If it favoured the squattocracy, he would not be on the side of the House to which he had at present the honor to belong.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

BRIGHTON RAILWAY.

Mr. MURRAY moved, That the petition of citizens of Dunedin, and settlers and residents in Brighton, Wangaloa, and surrounding districts, for railway construction, be printed.

Mr. TURNBULL would oppose every motion

Mr. Rolleston

brought forward for printing petitions, and he thought it was the duty of the House to do so. He imagined this petition was very much the same as every other petition of the kind, stating that the line would open up valuable land containing enormous wealth, and other particulars calculated, perhaps, to deceive the House. The country should not be put to the expense of printing such petitions.

Mr. MOSS said the honorable member for Bruce could not be aware that this was already a printed petition.

Mr. SPEIGHT thought the honorable member ought to explain why this petition should be printed; otherwise he would vote against the motion.

Major HARRIS did not think the country ought to be put to the expense of printing the petition. One member had as good a right as another to have petitions printed. If they were to print all the petitions they would fill *Hansard*, and there would be no room for his speech when he took it into his head to speak. Perhaps the honorable member wished to keep himself before his constituents: if other honorable members took the same course, they would have to get another reporter for *Hansard*.

Mr. DICK thought it expedient to print the petition, in order that they might have full information respecting the railway before any sum was passed on the estimates.

Mr. MURRAY was sorry to think honorable members wished to deprive the House of information in regard to what might be a valuable public work, and one which he trusted the House would agree to construct. It had claims inferior to none of the many railways already constructed. It showed a paltry spirit on the part of those who wished to deprive the House of the information which the petition contained, and to deprive the petitioners of the opportunity of placing it upon the records of the House. With regard to those honorable gentlemen who now came forward as the economists in the House, they had had a specimen of their sincerity the other day. The cost to the country of that debate would be twenty times the cost of printing this petition. It was of the utmost importance that the House should have the fullest information regarding projects which involved the expenditure of large sums of public money; and he would support the principle that all petitions of this kind should be printed. He would object to petitions affecting only private interests being printed.

Question put, "That the petition be printed;" upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	...	37
Noes	...	...	...	...	23
Majority for	...	...	...	...	15

AYES.

Major Atkinson,	Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Bain,	Mr. Seddon,
Mr. Barron,	Mr. Seymour,
Mr. Beetham,	Mr. Shephard,

Captain Colbeck,
Mr. Finn,
Mr. Fulton,
Mr. Gibbs,
Mr. Hall,
Mr. H. Hirst,
Mr. Hutchison,
Mr. McCaughan,
Mr. McLean,
Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Ormond,
Mr. Pitt,
Mr. Reid,
Mr. Richardson,
Mr. Rolleston,

Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Stewart,
Mr. Sutton,
Major Te Wheoro,
Mr. Thomson,
Mr. Tomosana,
Colonel Trimble,
Dr. Wallis,
Mr. Whitaker,
Major Willis,
Mr. Reader Wood,
Mr. Wright.

Tellers.

Mr. Dick,
Mr. Murray.

Noss.

Mr. Allwright,
Mr. Andrews,
Mr. Ballance,
Mr. De Lautour,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,
Mr. George,
Mr. Hislop,
Mr. Hursthouse,
Mr. Ireland,
Mr. London,
Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Moss,

Captain Russell,
Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Shrimski,
Mr. Speight,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Tainui,
Mr. Tole.

Tellers.

Major Harris,
Mr. Turnbull.

The motion was consequently agreed to.

B. WALKER AND W. MCWHIRTER.

On the motion of Mr. FINN, it was ordered, That the recommendations contained in the report of the Gold Fields Committee upon the petition of Benjamin Walker and William McWhirter be agreed to.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES BILL.

On the motion of Mr. TOLE, it was ordered, That the Committee to whom was referred the Slaughterhouses Act 1877 Amendment Bill consist of the following members—viz., Mr. Beetham, Mr. J. T. Fisher, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Moss, Mr. Pyke, Mr. Shephard, Mr. Stevens, Colonel Trimble, and the mover; three to form a quorum; and to report within seven days.

GOVERNMENT BANKING ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE.

Mr. BEETHAM, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he had communicated with the honorable member for Coleridge, who stated that he was quite willing to serve on the Committee. The honorable gentleman, like himself, was not overburdened with Committee work.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the number of the Government Banking Arrangements Committee be increased by one, and that the name of Mr. Wright be added thereto."—(Mr. Beetham.)

Mr. TURNBULL felt it his duty to oppose the motion. He was aware that there was a strong feeling against one member objecting to another member being added to a Committee. No charge of any personal feeling could be brought against him, as no one could entertain a higher respect than he did for the honorable

member whom it was now proposed to add to the Committee. He would call the attention of the House to this fact: that, when a Committee was appointed, members formed their judgment on it, and, as a whole, no honorable gentleman could be taken by surprise. He knew the honorable members proposed as the Committee, and had the opportunity of approving of or objecting to any of them. It would have an injurious effect to be constantly adding to a Committee which had been fairly and justly selected—it would have an injurious effect upon the character of the Committee, and upon the character of the House. The adding of names to a Select Committee which had been carefully chosen and appointed was widely different from adding names to the Public Petitions Committee. The argument that an individual had plenty of time to serve on a Committee ought not to weigh with the House. There were already seventeen members on the Committee, and it contained some of the most able members of the House. It was most unfair to add members to a Committee after it had been properly appointed. When a Select Committee was appointed individuals might be afterwards added to it for some particular purpose. He would object to any addition being made to this Committee, which had been fairly considered and appointed as a whole by the House. If the proposal were allowed, there would be no finality to the number of the Committee, or security that an impartial inquiry would be made.

Mr. HALL admitted that the principle contended for by the honorable member for Timaru might be very well as a general rule, but he thought the honorable member could hardly ask the House to apply it in this case. It was only yesterday that, on the motion of the honorable member for Wanganui, three names were added to this Committee; and that could scarcely have escaped the notice of the honorable member for Timaru. Having allowed that addition to pass by unnoticed, surely the honorable member for Timaru could not now say that no additions ought to be made to a Committee. The addition proposed by the honorable member for Wairarapa was an extremely desirable one. Not only did the honorable member for Coleridge possess more than ordinary qualifications for the office, but—what very few honorable members had—he had time at his disposal to devote to the work of this Committee. Under these circumstances, he (Mr. Hall) hoped the honorable member for Timaru would not press his objection.

Mr. STEWART would like to know if he was right in understanding the Premier to say that, because something was done yesterday, therefore something else should be done to-day.

Mr. HALL.—No.

Mr. STEWART would ask, why should the honorable member for Coleridge be selected and put upon a Committee of seventeen, so as to make an uneven Committee an even one? It was desirable there should be an odd number on these Committees. He hoped the House would reject the motion, unless some substantial reason were advanced for agreeing to it. If the fact that

three names were added yesterday were to be an excuse for putting one on to-day and another to-morrow, they would go on adding to Committees *ad infinitum*. He did not know what might be underlying the motion, but he hoped the House would resist it.

Mr. TURNBULL wished to explain that he was not in the House yesterday when the three names were added to the Committee, or he should have objected to it in the same way as he now did to this motion.

Mr. BROWN did not appreciate the reason offered by the Premier—namely, that, because three names were added yesterday, therefore one of his own choice should be added to-day.

Mr. HALL.—Does the honorable member assert that the name of the honorable member for Coleridge is my choice? I deny it.

Mr. BROWN.—I assumed so.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You had no right to do so.

Mr. BROWN.—I assumed so. The Premier has denied it. That is quite sufficient.

Mr. HALL.—Thank you.

Mr. BROWN did not think that three names being added on one day was a sufficient reason why another name should be added to the Committee on another day. This Committee consisted of fourteen members to begin with; three other names were added; and now another name was proposed. It appeared to him that there was something underlying this. He might be wrong, but such was his opinion. This was a trading transaction, and the question involved was, whether the Government account should be divided amongst several banks or should remain as at present. He had no doubt the banks might have their constituents, whom they might desire to have on this Committee. He might be wrong in assuming this; but banks were human—the same as individuals. It appeared to him somewhat suspicious that this addition should be asked for, more especially coming from the side it did. He thought the Committee was quite large enough, and would vote against the motion.

Mr. ANDREWS did not think the honorable member for Wairarapa had given good reasons why the name of the honorable member for Coleridge should be added to this Committee. He was sure no one respected that honorable gentleman more than he did, but there was an objection to his appointment on this Committee which no honorable member had yet alluded to. If he remembered rightly, the honorable member for Coleridge, in his address to the electors and in his published speeches, had declared himself a sworn enemy of the Bank of New Zealand. If so, he did not think it was fair to ask a gentleman who had declared himself very positively against a certain bank to take part in this Committee. He hoped the honorable member for Wairarapa would not press his motion under such circumstances. He could not believe for one moment that the honorable member for Coleridge would be willing to have his name placed on this Committee.

Mr. BEETHAM, in reply, said he was not in collusion either with the Bank of New Zealand or with any adversaries of the bank in this matter.

Mr. Stewart

He merely considered that, when a Committee of twenty-five could not get a quorum together of five, it was extremely probable that a Committee of seventeen would not be able to get a quorum to assemble. He thought no opposition could be offered to his motion, and he saw no reason at all for withdrawing it.

Motion agreed to.

HONORARIUM.

Mr. MOSS, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he would not trouble the House at any length with the motion he now brought forward. It was quite unnecessary to discuss the principles of the motion at all. That there should be an honorarium in the Legislature of New Zealand had been an established practice from the earliest foundation of the colony. But he thought that honorable members must all be tolerably well tired of the disputes which took place at the end of every session as to what the amount of that honorarium should be. It would be very desirable if they could avoid that. If it were settled by Statute once for all what the amount was to be, it would be a step in the right direction. He did not suggest what the amount should be. He did not propose to interfere with that in the least. Whatever the amount was, it ought to be settled by Statute, so that they might get rid of the question being discussed annually.

Mr. TOLE begged to second the motion. The only doubt that occurred to him at the moment was probably one of sentiment more than anything else. One did not like to hear the expression "payment of members:" it did not sound well; but, still, he thought the principle was good. They must ultimately come to face the question properly, and call it payment of members, and fix the amount by Statute. The next point was, what the amount should be. They all knew that the sessions were becoming varied in length, some short, and some probably very long; so that a fixed sum might turn out to be too little or too much, as the case might be. He thought they would do well to pass the motion, and then, when the Bill came down, they could discuss what the amount should be, and in what manner to be fixed.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the honorarium to members of the Legislature should be settled by Statute."—(Mr. Moss.)

Mr. GEORGE had great pleasure in supporting this motion, and hoped it would be carried by a large majority, and that the Government would see their way to introduce a Bill this session to give effect to the motion.

Mr. HALL said the Government was prepared to support this motion. The other day, when the question was asked whether the Government would introduce a Bill for payment of members, the Government replied that they would not. He drew a distinction between payment of members, and an honorarium merely for the purpose of enabling members to attend to their legislative duties without loss to themselves. That was the principle adopted in this colony in the past, and

he trusted they would adhere to it. In his opinion, seats in the Legislature should be open to all ranks and classes, and with that object in view the honorarium system had been in existence up to the present time; but he did not think that such emoluments should be attached to the position as would induce persons to seek election for the mere sake of those emoluments. He did not understand that to be the interpretation of the motion, and therefore he would be glad to support it.

Mr. PYKE was glad to hear what had been said by the Premier, and he thought it was time a stop was put to the display of the little, cheap patriotism that took place towards the end of every session. He did not remember a single session passing without some honorable members getting up and deprecating the honorarium, and then being the first to rush down to the Treasury to receive it. Speaking with regard to the honorarium of last session, he knew of two instances alone which would be quite sufficient to justify the House in making it a statutory payment. In one case, a gentleman went to his constituents and on the platform loudly denounced the payment of any honorarium; he declared that he had not touched a penny of it. That gentleman, however, was not returned, and, when he found he was not returned again to the House, he sent up to the Treasury and claimed the money. Another honorable gentleman went about the lobbies declaiming against what he was pleased to term the rapacity of honorable members. He was a Wellington member, and of course was not entitled to the full amount; but he took pains to make out that he was a country member, and actually claimed, though he did not obtain, the larger amount. It was really sickening to men who wished to keep the House open to all ranks and classes of the community to see some honorable members get up every session and, with a display of mock virtue and patriotism, talk about the rapacity of others, when they themselves were the most rapacious of the whole lot.

Mr. J. B. FISHER was very glad the Government had accepted the position of bringing down this Bill. It was quite time honorable members were relieved of the invidious task of clamouring over what that they should receive as honorarium. It would be within the recollection of many honorable members that, just before the prorogation and dissolution of the last Parliament, one honorable member stated that it would require the whole of his honorarium to secure his return to the House. He (Mr. Fisher) thought the House had every reason to congratulate itself upon the fact that the gentleman to whom he referred was no longer one of its members. He was quite of the opinion expressed by the previous speaker that it was time honorable members were relieved of the invidious duty of clamouring about what the amount of honorarium should be. It ought to be on the Statute Book, so that every person would know what he had to receive.

Mr. SHEEHAN could not understand the distinction drawn by the Hon. the Premier between honorarium and payment of members. He did not know by what kind of reasoning the Premier

could try to make out that a good thing could be done by way of honorarium, and a bad thing by payment of members. The objection to calling the Bill "A Bill to secure the Payment of Members" was an objection without foundation. There was another feature connected with the subject which had not been referred to by previous speakers. They had been told of the patriotism of those gentlemen who voted against the honorarium, and who afterwards went to their constituents and made a great point of the fact that they had voted against it; but he knew several of them who shook in their shoes when they went into the lobby against it for fear the motion would be lost. But they took the money, although they voted against the item. No matter what the opinions of honorable members might be, they must feel that the discussions which took place upon the subject year after year were lowering to the House. He felt perfectly certain that if the Government would bring in a Bill—they might call it what they liked—they would relieve the House from the recurrence of this discussion every year. There might be some question, when the Bill came down, whether the payment made to members of that House should be distinguished from the payment made to members of the other House.

Mr. BROWN could not understand why the Premier should make such a distinction between the honorarium and payment of members. The honorarium, whatever it might be fixed at, and whatever it might be called, would have to be paid in one lump sum, while the payment to members would extend over a period of twelve months; so that, if a member died, the country would save by the extended payment. The honorarium, as the Premier ought to know, was fixed by resolution at 200 guineas, and he did not see how it was to be altered, except by Statute, in which case it would have to be called payment of members. The Government should bring down a Bill upon the subject themselves, and not leave it to be dealt with by a private member.

Mr. MOSS said he was glad to find that the resolution had met with the approval of the Government, and he trusted that a Bill dealing with the question would be brought down on an early day. The point mentioned by the honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) would, no doubt, be easily overcome, and he had merely to add that it was satisfactory to find that the motion had met with such a favourable reception.

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Mr. SUTTON, in moving the motion standing in his name, said it related to one of the most important questions that could come before the Parliament. Local self-government was what the country wanted. It was, to his mind, of far more importance than the Triennial Parliaments Bill and the Representation Bill, which had been dangled before the country for some time past. Three weeks had elapsed since he gave notice of the motion, and it was therefore possible that for want of time nothing practical would be done in connection with the subject during the present

session. He would like to see the local governing institutions of the colony placed on a more satisfactory footing, and the system of local government so extended as to provide for the maintenance of all public works, as well as roads, hospitals, and charitable institutions, because it seemed to him that the management of the hospitals and charitable institutions was a very proper duty for the local bodies to undertake. They could not carry on very much longer under the existing state of things, for the hospitals of the country had been very sadly neglected, and were now in a position which was not at all creditable. The great difficulty was to discover where the local bodies were to find the funds. There was no doubt that the system of subsidies would have to be done away with, as it was not in the interests of good government to take money from the pockets of the ratepayers with one hand, and redistribute it to them with the other. The whole system of local government would have to be simplified. At present they had land-tax valuers and land-tax collectors, Road Board valuers and Road Board collectors, and county valuers and collectors, all of them going over the same ground in many cases. The sooner the Legislature stepped in and put a stop to this sort of thing, the better it would be for the country. The only sources of revenue that had suggested themselves to him to increase the revenue of local bodies were the stamp duties arising from transactions in land, and the succession duties. Owing to the party contest that had been going on for the last few weeks he had not had time to calculate what amount could be raised from these sources, but he thought that all duties chargeable upon land should be local revenue, and it would be better for the local bodies that this revenue should be paid over by Act rather than under the subsidy system. He was sure the House would agree that the present system did not work satisfactorily. They all knew that the local bodies of the North Island had exhausted their resources, and had got into debt in anticipation of the subsidies which they had not received. These subsidies should have been paid at the beginning of the financial year, but they had now reached the 30th of October, and the cheques for the subsidies were just leaving the Government offices. The local bodies should not be made to feel the effects of the political position. During the last recess they had seen the gentleman who was acting as Colonial Treasurer travelling all over the country instead of looking after its finances, and he therefore thought they should place the revenues belonging to these bodies absolutely beyond the control of any Government. Then they should go a little further, and give the local bodies power to rate all property within their bounds, including Native and Government property. Church and school property should form the only exception. In the case of Government property, if it suited them to keep the land until it increased in value through the expenditure of the local bodies, it was only fair that the local bodies should rate it and get some return for their improvements. The same remark applied to Native land. If it was part of the policy of the Government to

exempt Native land from taxation, it was the duty of the House to provide the rates that should be paid to the local bodies. The local bodies should not be affected by the politics of the country. Their duties should be confined to raising revenue and spending it for the benefit of their respective localities; and he was inclined to think they could do that very much cheaper than the House could do it for them. He was a great advocate for local self-government, and he hoped that next session they would see the question taken in hand and placed upon a more satisfactory basis, so that they would have local government in reality and not in name. In the part of the colony he came from they had a permissive Road Board Act, and the consequence was, that the most wealthy portions of the district were not included in any road district at all, and thus escaped the rates which other districts had to pay. He had hoped that that defect in the present system would be remedied this session. If the Government could see their way to do it he hoped they would bring in a thoroughly workable and substantial measure, and if they did so he felt sure the country would give them much greater credit than it would for passing all the great liberal measures they had had so much talk about.

Motion made, and question proposed, "(1.) That it is desirable that the system of local self-government at present in existence should be so extended as to provide for the efficient construction and maintenance of all public works (excepting railways and harbour works), all hospitals and charitable institutions. (2.) That, in order to enable local bodies to carry out their duty, it is necessary that their revenues should be increased (a) by the payment, monthly, of all duties collected in each district as stamp duties upon land or succession duties; (b) by increasing the maximum of general rates in the case of counties. (3.) That steps should be taken to prevent the counties and Road Boards clashing, and to more distinctly define the powers and duties of each of these bodies. (4.) That the Government be requested, as early as possible, to introduce a Bill for the purpose of carrying these resolutions into effect."—(*Mr. Sutton.*)

Mr. HALL said the question raised by the honorable gentleman was one of very large importance. With a great deal the honorable gentleman had said he entirely agreed; but he could not agree with some parts of the resolution—especially those providing for paying over to the local bodies the stamp duties upon land and the succession duties, which now went into the Colonial Treasury. The Government could not support the honorable gentleman in that proposition. No one felt more highly than himself the importance of having our institutions for local self-government placed on the best possible footing, and there was no doubt that at the present time they were not on such a footing. The truth was, the colony was in a period of transition in this respect. It had lost institutions which in times past, whatever their faults might have been, were well adapted to the infancy of the country, and did good and valuable work, and the colony had

Mr. Sutton

not yet arrived at the best substitute for them. It was perfectly true, as the honorable gentleman said, that in many instances the Road Boards, where they existed, clashed with the County Councils; and it would be surprising if they did not, because the organization of the two Boards had not been such as to make them harmonize. The County Councils were established by the General Assembly, while the Road Boards still rested in many instances upon the organization given to them by the Provincial Legislatures, at a time when the existence of counties was not contemplated. It was, therefore, no wonder that the two bodies did not harmonize. He held that it would be the duty of any Government which remained in office long enough to devote its time to something outside political questions, to take this matter in hand, and to propose a comprehensive and well-considered measure providing for the local self-government of the colony. One special feature of that Bill should be harmonizing the organization of the two bodies, so that they might, where necessary, exist and work side by side. He did not say that they were both required in all cases, but in the part of the country from which he came they did exist side by side, and worked harmoniously. That was, perhaps, because the County Councils had not undertaken many public works, and consequently two local bodies had not been undertaking the same work. The County Councils had recognized that the Road Boards had been doing their work well, and had therefore handed over to them a large proportion of the funds which came into the Councils' hands. In that provincial district the work had been practically left to the Road Boards; but there were other parts of the colony where the physical features were different, and where he could very well understand the same system would not answer. There were districts in which county roads were required, traversing, not one road district only, but several; and it was desirable that in those cases such roads should be under the management of the counties. It would be the duty of the Government to give its attention to the subject during the recess. With regard to increasing the revenue of these bodies, he did not know whether the Colonial Treasurer proposed now to address the House upon the subject, but he would rather leave it to his honorable colleague to deal with that question. He was an old member of a Road Board and Chairman of a county, and was in those capacities disposed to sympathize with the suggestion of the honorable mover, that it was hard upon these bodies that Government land should be exempted from rating. He did not, however, speak as a member of the Government, and did not know whether he would be able to carry out his local views upon the subject: but it did seem very hard that, in those road districts where large quantities of Crown land and Native land existed, it should devolve upon the freeholders of the district to provide roads which would enhance the value of those lands and assist in the sale of them. If it was not possible to provide for that difficulty by giving distinct power to rate Crown lands and Native lands, the circumstances should be taken

into consideration in the distribution of the public money for public works. If his honorable friend thought it necessary to press the motion, he should feel bound to move the adjournment of the debate; but he hoped that, having called attention to the subject, the honorable gentleman would accept the assurance of the Government that the matter would not escape their attention during the recess.

Mr. KELLY sympathized with the mover, although he could not agree with the motion. There were a great many things that the Government could do to simplify local government, and among them was especially the assimilation of the valuation of land for colonial purposes and that of land for local purposes. At present there were two systems of valuation, and it would simplify matters very much if there were only one valuation for the two purposes. The country was absolutely harassed by these annual valuations for Road Board purposes and for General Government purposes, and people should not be harassed in that way. He was aware that in England a system of valuation had been lately adopted that served for both general and local purposes, and he thought the same should be done here. With respect to a Local Government Bill, a promise had been made by each successive Government, since the abolition of the provinces, that one Road Board Bill for the whole colony should be passed; but that had not been done, and many districts had suffered great loss through not being able to establish Road Boards. In other places, also, the Road Board system was not under proper regulations owing to the very defective Provincial Ordinances under which the Road Boards had been established. Again, with regard to Native lands through which roads were made both by County Councils and by Road Boards, which roads very much enhanced the value of the land, those lands paid nothing towards the maintenance of the roads. If it was the policy of the colony to insist that Native lands should not be subject to ordinary taxation, then the Government should remunerate those Land Boards to the extent that the Native lands in their district would yield if rated. That was only a fair proposition; and, if the Government could consider the question in their various votes for Native purposes, they should do so. Again, with regard to land belonging to the Government, the principle was recognized in England that Imperial property should be subject to local taxation. If not recognized in the ordinary way, still payments had been made to the local bodies, which showed that the principle was recognized. It had also been recognized to a certain extent in this country, because subsidies were paid to local bodies for local purposes. As long as those subsidies were paid, he could not see how the local bodies could claim that Government property should be rated; but, when the subsidies ceased, then he thought all Government land should pay its share towards the maintenance of roads. As the Government had agreed to take the whole matter into consideration during the recess, it was perhaps scarcely worth while discussing it now; and he would only say he hoped the Government

would bring down a comprehensive measure dealing with the whole subject next session.

Mr. SHEPARD would move an amendment which he thought would meet the wishes both of the Government and of the mover of the resolution. The amendment he would move was, To omit all the words after "increased" in the second paragraph; and then the resolution would simply read, "That, in order to enable local bodies to carry out their duty, it is necessary that their revenues should be increased." That was a proposition the truth of which no one would deny. In many parts of the colony it was quite impossible for the County Councils to keep the main roads in repair; and if the Government could see their way to adopt the proposition of the honorable member for Napier (Mr. Sutton), to enable Crown lands to be rated, even at a low rate-charge, in those counties which were now in the greatest difficulty, their position would be completely changed. Instead of such a course increasing the general charge upon the country, he felt certain that even the worst-off of these counties would then be able to do with much smaller subsidies. It was in places where there were great lengths of road to keep in repair and only a small population that the counties were in the greatest difficulties. In some instances their revenues had been aided by grants from the General Assembly, but as a rule they had to maintain their roads out of rates, and subsidies in proportion to the amount levied on the inhabitants. These roads were necessary to open up the waste lands of the Crown and make them saleable, and they were necessary to give passage from one part of the country to another, but they were not of much benefit to the districts themselves. He spoke as a member of a County Council in one district and also as representing another district, and he could say that in those counties it was utterly impossible to keep the roads in repair out of the rates and subsidies; but if the proposition of the honorable member for Napier were adopted it would materially improve their funds, and the roads could be kept in thoroughly good order. He fully recognized the necessity of dealing with the question of preventing the Road Boards and County Councils from clashing. He thought that might be done in many instances in the way which the Premier said was adopted in the County of Selwyn—namely, by the County Councils distributing the greater part of its funds amongst the Road Boards, and letting them expend it; but that could not be done in every case. Means should therefore be taken to prevent these bodies quarrelling, and make them work together for the common good. He trusted the honorable member for Napier would accept his amendment, and that the Government would allow the resolution, as amended, to pass.

Mr. ANDREWS suggested that the mover of the motion should amend it by inserting the words "postal and telegraphs" after the words "harbour works" in the first paragraph, so that it should read "excepting railways and harbour works, and postal and telegraphs."

Mr. SUTTON did not think the amendment

Mr. Kelly

was at all connected with the question, as those departments were not connected with public works. He would ask permission to withdraw the motion, after the assurance given by the Government that they would take the matter into consideration.

Mr. LONDON was in favour of the motion as it was. He would be willing to take the amendment of the honorable member for Waimea; but he thought the amendment of the honorable member for Christchurch City had no meaning. He had had some experience of Road Boards and County Councils, and he was very glad to hear the Premier say, as a private member, that Crown lands in counties ought to pay rates. If that were done, it would be a great benefit to the counties. Under the Provincial Government in Auckland, those districts near the centres of population got a subsidy of only 25 per cent., and those in the interior got 50 per cent., so that the farther they were away from Auckland the more subsidy was given. That Act worked remarkably well, and was most popular. With regard to the subsidies now paid to local bodies, they were told that they would get nothing after 1880. If that should be the case, how were the country districts to keep roads, bridges, and ferries in repair? It would be impossible. If, however, Crown lands paid taxes, as was suggested by the Premier, he thought the local bodies could do very well without subsidies. Why should the country subsidize boroughs where the Government had no Crown lands, and where the money given was mostly wasted, since it only went to improve the property of private individuals? In the County of Hokianga, the rates were only £115 or £116 a year, and the expenses of the office were £109 or £110 a year. How much was left for the improvements of the roads and bridges in that county, where the colony held at present 366,000 acres of land? Those were the places where the public money should go to improve a large public estate. If they made roads and bridges in country districts people would go to reside in the country. But when the towns were made so attractive people did not care to go into the country. Of course, if they spent money in counties where the Government had valuable land they would enhance the value of that land, and when put up for sale the money would be recouped to the Treasury. Then, as another instance, he would take the County of Eden. There were twenty-three Highway Boards in that county, and under the Counties Act they were well supplied with funds. The county was about twelve miles long by six broad—not the size of some of the large farms in other places. The subsidies amounted to about £6,000 a year, because the rateable property was of great value; and all that money went year by year to subsidize people who did not want subsidies, while the country districts were entirely neglected. He thought the Treasurer might take this matter into consideration, because if the money were spent in country districts he might thus increase the revenue by the better sale of land. No matter how much they spent in places like the County of Eden, they could not bring in one

shilling more to the revenue. He would object to the motion being withdrawn, because it was the best on the Paper.

Mr. SEDDON thought that the Government, from the various opinions expressed, might be able to come to a satisfactory conclusion as to the amendments necessary in the local government Acts. He had had ten years' experience of the working of the provincial system, the Road Board system, and the present county system, and he thought the great evil lay in the Rating Act. In Westland they had 126 miles of main road, and the whole rateable value of the property only amounted to £8,000. Under the Rating Act, all lands unimproved were taxed at the rate of 5 per cent. on the original cost. If improvement had taken place, they had to pay so much on the value. Every improvement made meant an increase in the rates. He held that, if an amendment were made in the Rating Act, they should provide that where a main road ran through any of this land it should be held to be improved land, because it was most decidedly improved in value. If held by the Crown or a private individual, it should pay so much per annum, and power should be given to the local bodies to tax it. Lands lying away from roads might be rated at a fair percentage, as at present. If that were done, all lands, whether held by private individuals for speculative purposes or by the Government, would contribute a fair share to the local revenue of the district. At the present time, in his county, the whole of their revenue was taken for the maintenance of main roads; and it was found that the land which was improved in value by the construction of those roads paid nothing towards the revenue of the district. Road Boards and County Councils clashed at the present time, as there were two bodies in one district where one would be sufficient. In his district there had been five different Road Boards and a County Council, although the latter body could do all that was necessary. The Road Boards would not consent to be divested of their little authority, and would not submit to be merged in the county. The powers given under the present county system were fallacious. Sooner than be merged, some of the Road Boards incurred prospective liabilities, which, if they were merged into the county, would become actual liabilities, so that the county could not possibly take them over. There was too much local government in New Zealand. Between Jackson's Bay and Grey River they had altogether twenty local bodies, reckoning Road Boards, Boroughs, County Council, Board of Education, School Committees, and Waste Lands Board. That was within a radius of a hundred miles. It must be apparent to honorable members that there was too much administration, and that too much public money, derived from the people by direct and indirect taxation, was spent in defraying the cost of that administration. The sooner they utilized the local bodies and decreased their number, the sooner they would have that true system of local self-government which was perhaps intended when the question was first mooted and when the provincial system was abolished. The question raised by the

honorable member for Napier was so large a one that he felt, with the Premier, that at this stage of the session the Government would not be able to come forward with a comprehensive measure, giving the people the power of curtailing the number of local bodies, concentrating, if possible, the local bodies in the various districts, and devising other means than those now existing for raising revenues for maintaining those bodies. There were some points in the present Rating Act that ought to be remedied, so as to relieve the various local bodies in different parts of New Zealand. If the Government did not acquiesce in the amendment he had indicated, he should consider it his duty to bring it forward himself, and ask the House to give the various local bodies the powers which he had briefly sketched out on this occasion. The Act was defective, and if the defects were remedied the Westland County and other counties in the same position could double or treble the revenue they now received. From the expenditure of that money the people in the outlying districts would be able to make roads, so as to increase the value of the land; and in that way an increased revenue would be derived. He trusted the Government would consent to amend the Rating Act in the way indicated, so that people might have some relief in the meantime.

Colonel TRIMBLE said there was ample power in the existing Counties Act to meet the evil which the honorable member had just referred to. Under the present Act the tax was paid on the assessed value of the land. Whilst they were debating a measure which was hardly yet in embryo, the honorable member at the head of the Government would perhaps allow him to make a suggestion in reference to an alteration in the Rating Act. At present local bodies were prohibited from rating above 1s. in the pound. That was not sufficient to meet the requirements in places where the population was sparse. In the district from which he came, for two years they found that they had to tax themselves at the rate of 3s. in the pound. For the last two years they had settled down to levying a rate of 1s. 6d. in the pound; but if the rate were disputed by any individual he felt that it could not be enforced, as they were rating above the amount allowed by the Act. He did not see why 1s. in the pound should be fixed as the maximum. He thought it would be better to make the maximum rate 2s. 6d. or 3s. in the pound, and leave it to the discretion of the local bodies in the various localities to levy such a rate as would meet their requirements. In some districts a tax of 4d. in the pound would produce as much revenue as was required, while in other districts a rate of 1s. in the pound would not be sufficient to meet the requirements. In any Bill brought in to amend the Rating Act, he hoped the limit of the tax would be increased. There was another matter which he would like the Government to consider in preparing an amending Act. At present certain fees levied in a district were passed over to the local bodies, such as publicans' license fees and auctioneers' license fees. In his particular county the auctioneers carried on their business within the county—they could go anywhere

within the limits of the county. As a matter of fact their sales were mainly conducted outside the limits of the borough. The whole of the fees went to the borough, and the county got nothing at all. A large proportion of the revenue from publichouses was derived from the country people on market-days. There was a larger proportion of publichouses in the town than in the country, and the license fees went to increase the revenue of the borough. He would say that all those items of revenue should be paid at once into the Public Account, and a different mode of dealing with them adopted. Each district should get its subsidy, if subsidies were to be continued, upon the amount of taxes levied within the district. It would be more equitable if these fees were paid direct into the public exchequer, and the subsidies to district bodies enlarged. In the part of the country from which he came they had not experienced any clashing between the Road Boards and County Council. The County Council dealt with the main roads, and the Road Boards with the local roads. From his personal experience, he did not think there was any necessity for a change in the law in that direction; but with regard to the points to which he had alluded he thought there was a necessity for some change being made. He trusted the Government would give consideration to them when preparing the proposed measure. In view of such a measure being brought forward by the Government, the honorable member for Napier might consider the suggestion made to withdraw the motion.

Mr. MONTGOMERY moved that the debate be adjourned until that day month.

Debate adjourned.

GOLD DUTY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The adjourned debate was resumed on the question, That, in the opinion of this House, the gold duty should be reduced by 1s. per ounce.

Mr. FYKE said it would be well known to many honorable members that on several occasions he had opposed the abolition of the gold duty. He had expressed the same opinions before his constituents on the subject as he had maintained in this House. The mining industry was not what it formerly was in New Zealand, and he was prepared to admit that it required some relief from the burden of taxation imposed upon it. He could not agree with the original motion, nor with the amendment; but he was prepared to submit a compromise to the House which he thought would suit all parties. He would say that, having strongly in view the effect which the reduction or abolition of the gold duty would have upon those local bodies which at present received the revenue—and there were many members of those local bodies in the House—he would not propose any measure calculated to injuriously affect them. Nevertheless justice must be done to one of the industries which had rendered New Zealand prosperous and populous. He trusted no opposition would be raised by the honorable member for Collingwood, the honorable members for Hokitika, or the Government, to the compromise he would

propose. He would move, That the words "one shilling" be struck out, and the word "sixpence" be substituted in lieu thereof; and that the following words be added to the original motion: "per annum, commencing on the 1st January, 1880, until abolished in 1884." That was a reduction which the local bodies might well afford to bear. He was bound to refer to what he might term the compact of 1876. At that time the proposal was made by Sir Julius Vogel, and accepted by the Gold Fields members, that, on condition of allowing the gold duty to remain intact, no taxation whatever should be levied on mining property; and that condition was embodied in the 2nd subsection of section 37 of the Rating Act of 1876, which exempts from the operation of the Act "Lands, including buildings and improvements thereon, held under lease, license, or other authority from the Crown, for gold-mining purposes, other than so far as the surface may be used or occupied for other than such purposes." Should his amendment be carried it was only fair that that provision should be repealed. In his own part of the country there was no doubt that those who would derive the greatest benefit from the abolition of the gold duty would be the large companies. They employed a large number of men, and as they held their ground principally under mining leases they did not pay for miners' rights. It was not requisite that they should do so. So far as these companies were concerned, the individual miners received no benefit; they were employed as men would be employed in other industries. He did not say to what extent it would be wise or prudent to tax mining property. Where large capital was invested, that capital should pay towards local taxation, inasmuch as the companies derived benefit from the local expenditure. A tax could be imposed on mining machinery, buildings, and other property, without in any way affecting the working miners. He should be glad to hear from the honorable gentlemen on the Government benches whether they were prepared to agree to his proposal. It would give great relief to the mining industry of the colony, which undoubtedly required some assistance and relief from the burden now imposed upon it.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honorable member would not be in order in going back to the original motion, as the amendment thereon was now before the House.

Mr. DE LATOUR would suggest to the honorable member for Hokitika (Mr. Seddon) to withdraw his amendment, so as to allow the amendment of the honorable member for Dunstan to be received.

Mr. SEDDON asked leave to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. FYKE moved his amendment.

Mr. MASTERS hoped honorable members would consider this question in all its bearings before accepting any reduction of the gold duty until other means were adopted of subsidizing County Councils. He could understand honorable members representing constituencies not con-

Colonel Trimble

nected with gold fields looking at this matter as one not worthy of much consideration; but at the present time it was one of very great importance to County Councils in gold-fields districts. He might refer to the last return issued by the Grey County Council, from which it appeared that the total ordinary revenue, irrespective of special grants and subsidies, for the year ending 31st March last was £11,000. The gold duty for the same period amounted to £3,800, thus constituting fully one-third of the revenue. Considering that the Grey County Council was now heavily in debt, and, for want of funds, quite unable to execute many small public works urgently required, it would be absolutely necessary to provide further means of increasing the revenue. This was not the time to consider any matter involving a reduction of the revenue in any form. The same remarks, he thought, would apply to other County Councils on the West Coast. They would certainly apply to the Inangahua County Council. He had received a communication from the Chairman of the Grey County Council and the Chairman of the Inangahua County Council, expressing great alarm at the proposed reduction, and hoping that the Gold Fields members would in every possible way oppose this measure. It must be remembered that these County Councils had little or no land revenue to receive, while a heavy expenditure was incurred in the maintenance of roads, tracks, and bridges. Those acquainted with the West Coast would be aware that it was no unusual thing, during one of the heavy floods that frequently occurred, for a number of bridges to be washed away, and great damage done to roads. In fact, the powers of the County Councils were taxed to their utmost extent. The main roads were originally constructed on such a narrow gauge that it was impossible for two vehicles to pass each other. The maintenance of these roads necessitated a continual heavy expenditure. A number of men were constantly employed in keeping the roads open for traffic. There were many other works thrown upon the County Councils which pressed very heavily upon their funds, and they looked with alarm at the introduction of any measure which would curtail the ordinary sources of revenue. Apart from these considerations, he would be strongly in favour of the reduction or abolition of the gold duty. For several reasons he looked upon it as an obnoxious tax. It was a tax that fell heavily on one class of the community—on the miners, who were already very heavily taxed. He was very glad to see that a Bill was to be introduced for the reduction of the cost of miners' rights. As the mining companies were benefited by the expenditure of the public money, it was only proper that they should be taxed in some form, and he thought a tax in the least objectionable form should be imposed, especially if it only affected those companies to the amount of the gold they produced. Taking all these matters into consideration—considering that the funds of the County Councils could not at the present time be in any way curtailed without affecting their usefulness—he hoped honorable members would well weigh this

subject in their minds, and oppose the proposed reduction of the gold duty.

Mr. REID said that, while admitting that there was a considerable amount of sound argument in the remarks of the honorable member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters), he was disposed to support the solution of the difficulty which had been proposed by the honorable member for Dunstan—namely, the yearly reduction of the gold duty by 6d. per ounce, extending over a period of four years. He thought this solution would be much more acceptable than anything else that had been suggested. He knew that the great difficulty in dealing with this question was this: what was to be substituted as county revenue if the gold duty were withdrawn? He could bear out the remarks which were made by the honorable member for Grey Valley, who said that he had received a telegram from the Inangahua County Council against the abolition of the gold duty. He (Mr. Reid) had received the following message from the Mayor of Hokitika and a member of the County Council:—

"It is a serious thing to abolish the gold duty, which comprises nine-tenths of the county revenue. How on earth are the roads, tracks, and bridges of this immense country to be maintained, if the main source of revenue is cut away? We must close the county office, if this becomes law. No one complains of the tax here, which is a fair one: £5,000 of every £6,000 received by the county is for gold duty."

There was no doubt that this special taxation must, in the course of time, be done away with. It was unfair to the mining communities that they should have to support their counties in this way by paying special taxation, when railways and other public works were maintained out of the general revenue. He could not but agree with the remarks made during this discussion by the honorable member for Totara, when he pointed out the difference between the roads made on the gold fields, and the railway works completed in the more settled districts. The difference between the two sides of the South Island was this: that the people on the West Coast had, in one county alone, 152 miles of road to maintain out of county revenue, or, they might say, out of gold revenue almost entirely, whereas, when the public works and immigration policy was introduced, the railways were to be constructed out of the borrowed money, and maintained out of the general revenue. The gold-mining industry, he thought, was one that had not been fully appreciated or attended to in past years by that House. He thought the returns already laid on the table showed that the amount of gold exported from the colony within the last fourteen or fifteen years was sufficient to pay off the liability of the colony twice over. This was a fact that ought to be borne in mind in dealing with this industry. He met with some statistics the other day in reference to the district which he had the honor to represent, and he found figures which were perfectly astonishing. Between 1865 and 1875 they exported from one port alone of the West Coast (Hokitika) £7,440,948 sterling value of gold; and he would also point out that the gold-

mining industry, instead of decreasing, within the last three years had been rapidly increasing. In that particular district, in 1876, they exported gold of the sterling value of £141,948; in 1877 there was an increase of nearly £70,000, the value being £213,616; and in 1878 there was again an increase, the total value being £243,068. And making up the returns for the first eight months of the present year, he found that the total value of the gold exported from Hokitika was no less than £163,242; thus showing that, while the colony within the past year had been suffering from severe depression, the gold-mining industry in that particular part of the district had been gradually increasing. He thought, if a little more attention were paid by that House to the gold-mining industry of the colony, they would see very few meetings similar to that held recently in Wellington, of people seeking employment. He would support the reduction of sixpence, as the best solution of the question now under consideration.

Mr. SHEEHAN said that, before the question was put, he would like to say a few words. He now happened to be, for the first time in his life, a gold-fields member. For many years he was connected with the Thames Gold Field, and in that House he had on many occasions given his support to the reduction of the gold duty. Since the alteration which had taken place consequent upon the abolition of the provinces, it appeared to him that this gold duty had assumed a different aspect altogether. It was now the property of the local bodies. In abolishing that duty the House was not giving away funds that belonged to it, but the funds of the local people; and it was quite likely that, in two or three years after the abolition of the duty, these local bodies would come to the House and say, "You have abolished this duty: make it up in some other shape." What they ought to do, as a far better compromise, would be this: to pass a Bill in such a shape that the local bodies would have power to lower the duties, if they thought proper. He was not prepared to say that the Thames people regarded the abolition of the gold duty in a favourable light. It was quite true they did not receive the same revenue as the Councils did on the West Coast Gold Field, because the Thames Gold Field was the freehold property of the Natives, who received a large portion of the revenue which in other places would go into the hands of the local bodies. He thought that, if they abolished the duty at the Thames absolutely, the House must make some provision to make up for it; otherwise they would not be able to maintain the roads under the severe traffic to which they were subjected. He would take the opportunity of speaking more fully upon the matter when the Bill to give effect to the reduction came down.

Mr. DE LAUTOUR did not think the permissive principle suggested by the honorable member for the Thames would be quite fair. Any county which happened to have an extraneous source of revenue and a rich Land Fund, or which bordered on another county having a rich Land Fund, would be at a great advantage; but a

poor county that had to struggle with the maintenance of heavy main roads really could not adopt that principle, and they would be obliged to keep up the tax on the miners to the fullest possible strain. The truth was, that local finance had broken down altogether in the county system, and it was admitted that there must be some readjustment. The Government itself admitted that day that a readjustment was necessary. That being so, he thought the proposal of the honorable member for Dunstan was a fair one. He knew that, in the face of all these difficulties through shortness of finance, the counties in Otago had passed resolutions advocating the abolition of this duty, prepared to face all difficulties rather than keep up what was felt to be an oppressive tax in districts where the earnings of the people were not very great. If the earnings of the people inhabiting the district affected were large, the matter would be different; but the bulk of the counties were populated by a class who merely made sufficient for a livelihood, and it was upon that class that the tax was very oppressive. He thought that if the Government could meet them with this gradual reduction it would be a fair compromise. The gold duty itself would not make those arterial roads which were necessary in gold-fields districts. He would be glad to see this gradual reduction carried out.

Mr. MURRAY said this was the time for permissive Bills, and he was just going to rise when the honorable member for the Thames got up in his place, and, in much better language than he (Mr. Murray) could command, proposed the adoption of the permissive principle in this matter. They were all in favour of local self-government, and he thought it right to allow the several districts to dispense with this gold duty if they thought fit to do so.

Mr. SEDDON said no arguments had been brought against the amendment now before the House. The honorable member for Grey Valley (Mr. Masters) informed the House that he had been telegraphed to and asked to oppose this measure, but the latter part of the remarks of the honorable member clearly showed that there was a claim for this reduction. He, too, had received a telegram asking him not to support this motion because it would certainly injure the financial position of the local bodies. His reply was, that he would see that just provision was made for the deficiency of revenue. It was well that the House should know that there were large leases held by companies, which got enormous profits, but paid really nothing to the revenue of the district—nothing in proportion to what they would pay if they were to be taxed the same as all other property—farms and business places: if they were taxed on annual value they would contribute far more to the revenue than what they had been doing. No distinction had been made between these large companies and the ordinary gold-miner, who was most affected by the gold duty. The ordinary miner only earned about £2 a week, and he paid £2 per annum as a special tax. He thought it was full time a change should take place, and that the ordinary miner should not be called upon to pay so

much in the way of special taxation. With regard to the telegram from the Mayor of Hokitika, saying that it was not the wish of that district that this gold duty should be abolished, he might say that he stood there, and his colleague, too, to give a positive denial to that, because, when the election was going on, each of them on the hustings was asked the question, and pledged himself to support the reduction of the gold duty. The fact of their being in the House gave a denial to that statement, and he therefore had no hesitation in saying that it was not in accordance with fact. Three-fourths of the people in the district were gold-miners, whose wages averaged about £2 per week; and it was not likely they would ask to keep up a tax upon themselves of £2 per annum. Of course every district was differently situated. In the case of the Thames, it seemed that the miner's right fees went to the Natives, and the gold duty to the City Council, and the member for that district (Mr. Sheehan) proposed the adoption of the permissive principle. He (Mr. Seddon) objected to that principle, as it always resulted in failure. The Counties Act was an example of that, and he was inclined to think that the Grey County Council, which was composed of gentlemen who did not themselves suffer from it, would prefer to keep the gold duty in force. Of course that would send all the gold into the County of Westland, if the duty was abolished there, and the Grey County would very soon be glad to come to terms. However, when the Bill was introduced to give effect to this resolution—and he would introduce it himself if necessary—he hoped the House would see that the time had come to affirm the principle. Two years ago the last 6d. per ounce was paid in New South Wales, and he hoped the duty would be finally abandoned here.

Mr. GIBBS said he brought forward the motion because he had felt that the miners should have some relief in this matter, although there might be a difference of opinion on the subject between the settlers and the miners. The miners felt that they were at a disadvantage: not that they complained so much of the tax, but they found that they received little or no advantage from the expenditure of the money. Most of the works were carried out under the Road Board, the members of which were not elected by the miners; and they were therefore compelled to assist in the maintenance of a system over which they had no control. His own district was very much like the Thames in this respect: that a great deal of the miners' rights fees went to the Natives in the District of West Wanganui. The local body of the district had not communicated with him on the subject, but he felt assured that a great part of the people in the district would object to the loss in revenue, and it was no doubt a matter for grave consideration how the loss should be made good. There were the people who were interested in keeping it up; but there was another section of the community whose interest it was to see it removed. He hoped, however, that the settlement of the district would progress, so that before long the loss to the revenue would not be felt. He had not, when he first moved in the

matter, thought of a total abolition, but only of a partial relief; but the tax was a very burdensome one, and he would not object to see it altogether removed. They could settle the details when the Bill was before them. He would be willing to accept the amendment.

Mr. SPEIGHT agreed that it was best to reduce the tax by degrees, as its total and sudden abolition might operate injuriously upon the public works in certain districts. There could be no two opinions as to the injustice of the tax as a tax. The honorable member for the Thames (Mr. Sheehan) proposed that the abolition should be permissive. He would like to ask the honorable gentleman whether he would be prepared to introduce the permissive principle in the matter of allowing the local bodies to rate mining property; because the want of that power was the only argument for the maintenance of the gold duty. The real trouble was, that men engaged in this industry had to face difficulties which persons connected with other industries had not to face, and the honorable member for the Thames had given a fair explanation of this. They had to pay for their miners' rights, and this revenue did not go to the local body. They had to pay fees to the Government for every piece of ground they took up under lease, and in every possible way the miner had to contribute to the revenue of the district in which he lived. Why then should this industry be taxed above all others? Mining had now become a permanent industry—it was not one that could be started to-day and abandoned to-morrow; and the people engaged in it ought to be placed on a par with other people. The real way out of the difficulty was to give the local bodies the right to tax mining property—not the surface area, but the plant; and, when they did that, the cry against the abolition of the gold duty would disappear altogether.

Question put, "That the words 'one shilling' stand part of the question," and negatived.

Question put, "That the word 'sixpence' be inserted;" upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	39
Noes	17
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Majority for	22
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AYES.

Mr. Allwright,	Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Andrews,	Mr. Reid,
Major Atkinson,	Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Ballance,	Mr. Sheehan,
Mr. Brown,	Mr. Shephard,
Mr. Bryce,	Mr. Shrimski,
Captain Colbeck,	Mr. Speight,
Mr. De Lautour,	Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Finn,	Mr. Tainui,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,	Mr. Tawhai,
Mr. George,	Major Te Wheoro,
Mr. Gibbs,	Mr. Tole,
Mr. Gisborne,	Mr. Tomoana,
Mr. Hall,	Mr. Turnbull,
Mr. Hamlin,	Dr. Wallis,
Major Harris,	Mr. Whitaker,

Mr. H. Hirst,
Mr. Ireland,
Mr. Landon,
Mr. Montgomery,

Mr. Reader Wood.
Tellers.
Mr. Pyke,
Mr. Seddon.

NOES.

Mr. Bain,
Mr. Barron,
Mr. Beetham,
Mr. Johnston,
Mr. McLean,
Mr. Ormond,
Mr. Saunders,
Mr. Seymour,
Mr. Richardson,

Mr. Stewart,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Sutton,
Mr. Thomson,
Colonel Trimble,
Mr. Wright.
Tellers.
Mr. Kelly,
Mr. Masters.

The amendment was consequently agreed to, and the resolution, amended as follows, agreed to: "That, in the opinion of this House, the gold duty should be reduced by sixpence per annum, commencing on 1st January, 1880, until abolished in 1894."

NEW RIVER PILOT-STATION RESERVE BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, That the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put, "That I do leave the chair," upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	40

Majority against	26
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AYES.

Mr. Barron,
Mr. De Lautour,
Mr. J. B. Fisher,
Mr. George,
Mr. Hamlin,
Major Harris,
Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Murray,

Mr. Shephard,
Mr. Stewart,
Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Tole.

Tellers.

Mr. Seddon,
Mr. Shrimski.

NOES.

Mr. Allwright,
Mr. Andrews,
Major Atkinson,
Mr. Beetham,
Mr. Brandon,
Captain Colbeck,
Mr. Dick,
Mr. Finn,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,
Mr. Fulton,
Mr. Gibbs,

Mr. McDonald,
Mr. McLean,
Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Ormond,
Mr. Richardson,
Mr. Rolleston,
Captain Russell,
Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Studholme,
Mr. Sutton,
Mr. Tawhai,

Mr. Gisborne,
Mr. Hall,
Mr. H. Hirst,
Mr. Hislop,
Mr. W. J. Hurst,
Mr. Johnston,
Mr. Kelly,
Captain Kenny,
Mr. Landon,
Mr. McCaughan,

Mr. Tomcans,
Colonel Trimble,
Mr. Turnbull,
Mr. Wakefield,
Mr. Whitaker,
Mr. Wright.

Tellers.

Mr. Bain,
Mr. Hursthouse.

The motion was consequently negatived.
Bill reported with amendments.

WELLINGTON HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

The House went into Committee on this Bill.

Clause 7.—First appointment by the Governor.

Mr. GEORGE moved the addition of the following words: "Members of the Board appointed by the Governor, whose term of appointment shall have expired, shall not be eligible for reappointment by the Governor until the expiration of one year thereafter."

Question put, "That the words proposed to be added be there added;" upon which a division was called for, with the following result:—

Ayes	9
Noes	29

Majority against	20
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AYES.

Mr. Hislop,
Mr. Johnston,
Mr. Moss,
Mr. Seddon,
Mr. Shrimski,

Mr. Swanson,
Mr. Wright.
Tellers.
Mr. George,
Mr. W. J. Hurst.

NOES.

Mr. Allwright,
Mr. Andrews,
Mr. Bain,
Mr. Beetham,
Mr. Brandon,
Mr. Finn,
Mr. J. T. Fisher,
Mr. Fulton,
Mr. Gisborne,
Mr. Hall,
Mr. H. Hirst,
Mr. Hursthouse,
Mr. Kelly,
Mr. Landon,
Mr. Mason,

Mr. McLean,
Mr. Montgomery,
Mr. Moorhouse,
Mr. Oliver,
Mr. Pitt,
Mr. Rolleston,
Mr. Stevens,
Mr. Studholme,
Colonel Trimble,
Mr. Turnbull,
Mr. Wakefield,
Mr. Whitaker.
Tellers.
Mr. Levin,
Mr. Richardson.

The amendment was consequently negatived.
Bill reported with amendments.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past one o'clock a.m.

END OF THE THIRTY-SECOND VOLUME.

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